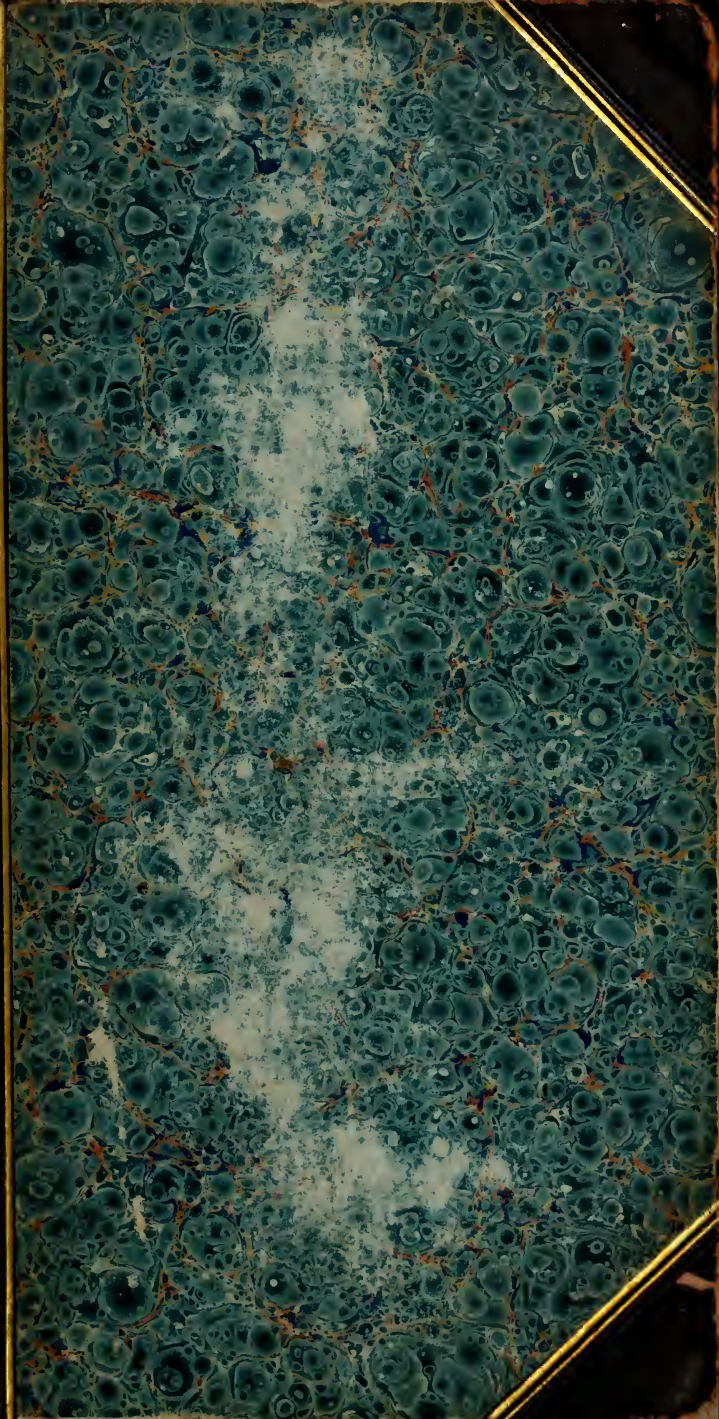


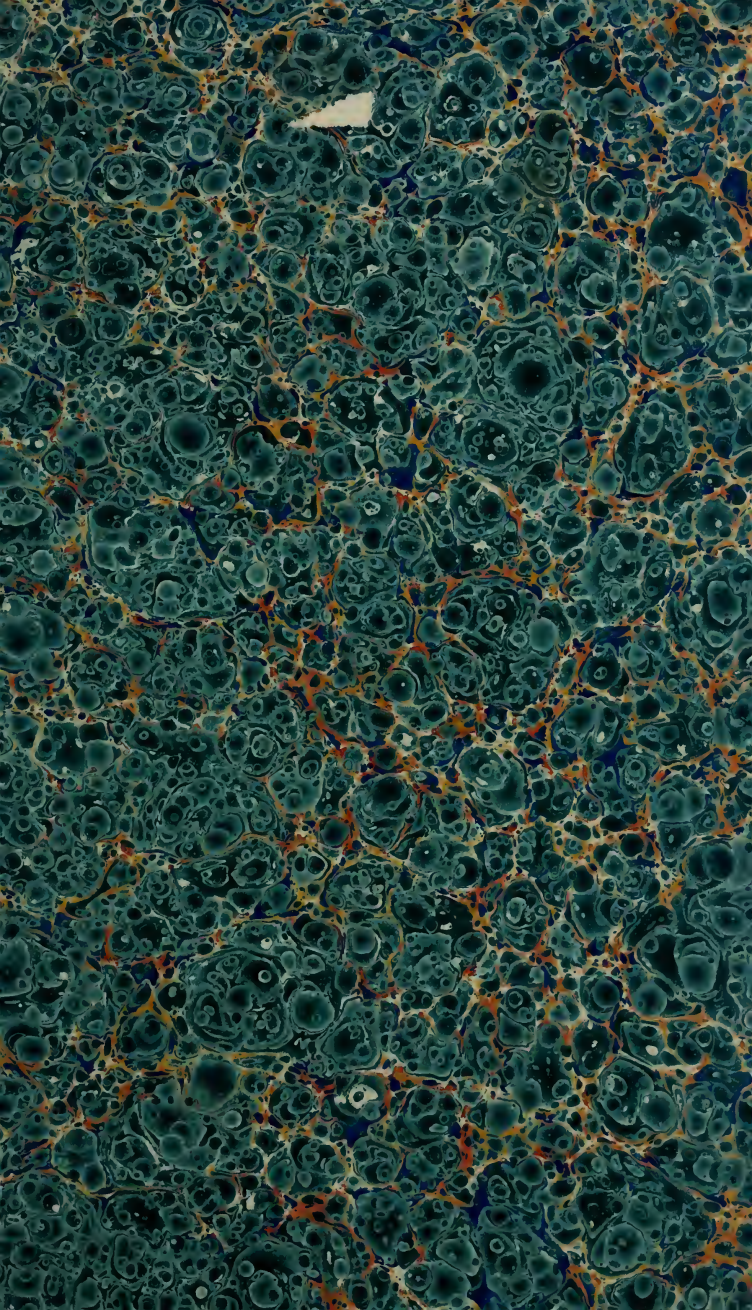
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GRACE CASSIDY;

OR,

THE REPEALERS.

A NOVEL.

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

Some popular chief,
More noisy than the rest, but cries halloo,
And in a trice the bellowing herd come out;
The gates are barr'd, the ways are barricado'd:
And one and all's the word: true cocks o' th' game!
They never ask for what or whom they fight;
But turn 'em out, and show 'em but a foe;
Cry Liberty! and that's a cause for quarrel.

DRYDEN'S *Spanish Friar*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1833.

THE REPEALERS.

CHAPTER I.

“ Know,

Without or star, or angel for their guide,
Who worship God, shall find him. Humble love,
And not proud reason, keeps the door to heaven ;
Love finds admission, where proud Science fails.”

WE left Jim Cassidy, though somewhat loth, spending his evenings at his own cottage, instead of, as formerly, visiting the Cat and Bagpipes ; and for the first time of her life, Grace accepted joyfully a sacrifice, though she saw it was unwillingly and uncheerfully made.

Hard is the fate of her who is compelled to accept of such, and yet be thankful that they

are made ! Poor Grace had sensibility and delicacy enough to feel all this as keenly as the most refined heroine of romance, though she could not express it so well.

Jim would sit in moody silence, his naturally open brow knit into a scowl, and his hands hanging listlessly over his knees ; while Grace turned her spinning-wheel or plied her needle. She used to try all her powers of conversation to amuse her husband, until she felt, in all its bitterness, the sentiment expressed by the French woman, whose irksome task it was to amuse a man, and a king too—that he was no longer amusable.

“ If it wouldn't tire you, Jim dear,” said Grace one evening, when she had exhausted all her powers of amusing him, and found the effort vain, “ maybe you'd read aloud to me, as you used to do oncet ;” and a sigh unconsciously followed the observation.

“ Sure, so I would Grace,” replied Jim, “ but the devil a newspaper have I ; and as for rading the ould books we’ve read over so often, sure it tires me, and does me no good.”

“ Well, I won’t ax you, Jim, if you don’t like it ; but sure it is not half so tiresome as to be sitting doing nothing at all, with the hands idle and the thoughts busy with vexing subjects. Nothing is such a comfort, when one has vexing thoughts, as to keep the hands active, and to try and turn the poor troubled mind to something else. When I feel unaisy, as often I have done of late, God help me ! I open the Bible which Miss Desmond (that was) gave me, and when I read of the troubles that others have had, and think that we are all born to ‘ trouble as the sparks fly upwards,’ it seems to me that I forget my own cares in pitying those I read of, though they have found rest long and long ago.”

“ I’d like to know what the Sogarth* would say to you,” said Jim, “ if he knew that you were reading a Protestant Bible ; sure I see that Miss Desmond, or Mrs. Forrester as I ought to call her, wants to convert you by giving you such a book. It’s very well for her that is a great lady, and has got her heaven upon *this earth*, as all them rich tyrants have, to forget that there’s another heaven that by rights is kept for us who never enjoy this life, having to toil, and moil, and work, while they have all the fruit of our labour. But we must think of the heaven in the world to come, which we surely won’t get a place in, if we don’t mind what the Sogarth tells us, and he certainly warned us not to read the Bible.”

“ Och ! Jim, can you with your fine heart, bear to think that, bekase people are rich in this world, they cannot, will not enjoy heaven

* Priest.

if they deserve it? Could you bear to think, that the dear, good ould masther and mistress, and Miss Desmond, Mrs. Forrester I mane, and her husband too, won't be all in heaven, and that we won't have the comfort, and a great one it will surely be, of seeing them there?"

"I mane to say, what the Priest tells me, that no one out of our own Roman Catholic religion will be saved; and as for the rich, sure the priest himself tould us all, and said he took it out of the Bible, that it was easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

"If it's a sin to read the Bible, why then does the priest read it?" asked Grace, with all a woman's quickness; "and sure, if he tould you that passage, he ought to tell you also, that it manes that rich people are tried with so many

more temptations than the poor, in the way of having the power of indulging all their fancies, that as it is more difficult for them, so have they more merit for being good, and deserving heaven, than the poor have."

"But what have you to say, Grace, against what the Sogarth tould us all? Says he, 'Sure them that lives in fine houses, sitting on gold chairs covered with silks, and the very walls covered with silks and satins, and pictures that oftentimes isn't dacent; walking on carpets that's smoother than the finest meadow in the month of May; ating the richest of meats off silver, and dhrinking the brightest of wines out of glasses that's as clear as the dew on the leaves and herbs in the morning; lying on beds as soft as the down of the thistle, and on sheets white as the dhriven snow, curtains falling around 'em of the richest colours, and not letting a breath of could air blow on 'em; and

when they're tired of ating and dhrinking, and riding, and dhriving, with horses that look as if they, too, were come of noble fathers and mothers, they can hear music that goes to the very heart and can make one jump for joy, or sit down and think of all them that's gone till the tears come into the eyes; they can then lie down on their soft beds, sure and çertain that the morning will bring 'em back the same grandeur and pleasures they had the day before; and sure their sleep must be pleasanter than a poor man's; and what elegant drames they must have going to their soft beds, with their stomach full of such fine food of every kind. And then,' says the priest, ' would it be just or natural, that them that have such a heaven upon earth should also have a heaven in the other world? Sure 'twould be a crying shame if they had.' ”

“ Och ! Jim honey,” said Grace, “ what a

false picture the priest drew ! Sure it's a sin and wickedness to put envy and jealousy into the minds of the poor against the rich, by making 'em believe what's not true. The grand people are so used to the fine gold chairs, and walls covered with silks and smooth carpets, that they don't remark 'em as we would do ; they are always before their eyes, and give 'em no pleasure ; and it's only in case they were taken from 'em that they'd begin to think about 'em. The grand dinners they are mostly tired of ; and sure enough the housekeeper at Springmount has tould me that the great people took more pleasure in plain, common things to eat, on account of the novelty, than in all them rich savoury dishes they have before 'em every day. Then, as they don't work hard like us, they are seldom hungry, and they force their appetites by unwholesome things, which often makes 'em sick and sorrowful too,

for you'll see ten, ay twenty, grand, idle gentlefolks ill, for one hard-working man or woman, which ought to reconcile us to work. That bright wine too, which looks like damask roses, and clove carnations turned into liquor, does 'em more harm than good; and when they lie down on them soft beds, with their poor stomachs too often overloaded, or else that what they eat is too rich, many an hour they lie tumbling and tossing, more unaisy than the poorest labourer on his bed of straw, and throubled with night-mares and dhreams that seldom come near the poor man's bed. The rich have a thousand vexations that we have not, ay Jim, the very best of 'em have their troubles; and as they are brought up with every thing so grand about 'em, they get into a way of believing every thing ought to happen as they like, and therefore their disappointments hurts 'em more than ours do us; indeed,

they feel things more keenly, and take many things to heart that we wouldn't understand at all. So you see that those, if they have more pleasures, have also more pains than us, for God makes every thing equal. The rich have to think of us and for us : we depend on them, and sure a heavy burthen we must be to their minds, thinking what they can best do to make us aisy and comfortable. All the pleasures the rich and great have too, Jim dear, that seems so delightful to us, isn't so to them, for they're too well used to 'em to take much enjoyment in 'em, but their cares and throubles fall harder on 'em than on us, who are too well hardened in minds and bodies to fret as they do. Then, if grief comes to us, we haven't time to give ourselves up to it ; we're obliged to work and be active, and that dhrives it away from us by day ; and the hard labour, by tiring us, makes us sleep sound by night, so that we

get over it sooner. But the rich, who have nothing to do but to think, brood over their grief; and sure it's a sorrowful sight to see weeping and wailing in grand rooms, with every thing around as if they were made only for rejoicing. The very grandeur makes the person grieve more; for if he has lost some one he loved that shared it all, it reminds him more and more of the loss; and it's a mournful thought to look around on all the beautiful things about, and to think of the dark, gloomy vault where those he is grieving for is lying; for though them that's gone can't see or feel how dismal the vault they're resting in is, or what a difference there is between it and the fine houses they have left, them that's left behind often thinks of it, and the comparison adds to their trouble."

"Why faith, Grace, you'd thry to persuade a body that the poor is happier than the

rich ; but you won't get many to believe you. Maybe you 'd be for telling us that the masther isn't happier than I am ?”

“ Sure, Jim dear, it's myself that has no raison to be proud any way, when you, my husband, who I pass my life in thrying to make happy, thinks a poor ould gentleman, a rich, and a grand, and rael gentleman he is to be sure, happier than you, a fine, comely, hearty, healthy boy, with a loving wife, and wanting nothing but the spirit of contentment, which may God give you! ”

“ Why, what does the ould masther want, Grace? Hasn't he oceans of gold and the whole side of a counthry belonging to him? Hasn't he a good wife, though she is a Sassenach, and a fine beautiful daughter? What more would he want ?”

“ Do you forget, Jim, that he lost his son and heir, and never had a second ? Isn't this

a terrible grief to a father's heart, when he had, as you say, oceans of gold, and the whole side of a counthry to give him, and an ould grand name, respected all round Ireland? Sure, the more he had to leave his son and heir, the more heavy must be the loss to him. When a poor man loses his child, though he grieves truly, he hasn't so many different vexatious thoughts to make it worse as the rich man has; and he thinks, 'Well, he's gone to a better place, and is at rest from all labour for evermore!' If he's hard-worked himself, he thinks his child that's gone to heaven is saved a life of toil and privation, and this comforts him. Now though the dear ould masther has the best daughter in all Ireland, still it is not like having a fine grand gentleman to stand in his father's shoes, and keep up the name of Desmond. Then the masther has passed all his long life in doing good to all about him, and

now that he's an ould man, isn't it a bitter sight for him to see the whole counthry forgetting his goodness, and, like ungrateful, unnatural children, turning against their own father, for such he ever has been to us all, and instead of listening to his good advice, and following it, to know that they think of nothing on earth but mischief and repaling? Och! Jim, sorry am I to say, the dear ould masther is *not* happy, and more shame to them that puts a thorn in his side; for what goes to the heart like ingratitude from those we've been liking and serving all our days, as he has been sarving all the whole counthry?"

"Why, Grace, you talk as if I didn't love the ould masther and the family, when it's you that's mistaken, for I do."

"I know you ought, Jim dear, and I hope you do; but it's a quare way you take to show it, by going quite contrary to his ad-

vice, when you and all your blood that came before you, has had years and years of good actions, and noble actions, from the masther, to prove he is your best and only thrue friend."

CHAPTER II.

“ It is a busy talking world,
That with licentious breath blows like the wind
As freely on the palace as the cottage.”

“ Slander meets no regard from noble minds ;
Only the base believe what the base utter.”

So unconscious was Lady Oriel of any cause for a change in the manner of her friends and acquaintance, that she did not observe it ; but it was not lost on her husband, who, sensitively alive to even the shadow of disrespect, was wounded to the quick by it, and mentally blamed her severely for having given birth to

such impertinence, as also still more bitterly for not perceiving to what she had exposed herself. Some ladies, who were barely tolerated in society, and whose conduct scarcely merited toleration,—if the cold reception they experienced in the few houses to which they had the *entrée* could be so called,—might now be seen to approach Lady Oriel with a confidence and ease very different to the embarrassed and humbled air with which they formerly tried to catch her eye or court her notice.

Each day found Lord Oriel still more cold and repulsive, and his wife now almost dreaded a *tête-à-tête* with him. Lord Delmore, as he became better acquainted with Lady Oriel, began to question the success of which, at the commencement of his attentions, he entertained no doubt. The more he saw of her, the more he became convinced of the purity of her mind, and that he owed the favour with which he was

treated, to her perfect freedom from suspicion that any meaner feeling than friendship urged the attentions which, he now believed, would be spurned with contempt, if their real motive were avowed.

How many women's reputations have been for ever compromised by a belief in the *friendship* of men!—a sentiment that no woman excites in the breast of man, until she has lost the charms that gave birth to other and more passionate ones.

The vanity of Lord Delmore,—that craving passion that sleeps not while aught is left to animate it,—now became alarmed. He counted the few weeks of the season still remaining ere the close of the session would release the members from their parliamentary duties, and send them from London for many months. In proportion to his doubts of triumphing over the principles of Lady Oriel, became his

anxiety *d'afficher* his attentions, and to compromise her reputation ; and with the unthinking sentimentality of most of her sex, she attributed this change of manner to his excited feelings at the prospect of their approaching separation ; and repaid it with increased kindness.

In the unsuspecting purity of her heart, how often did she lament that Lord Oriel partook not of her friendly feelings for Lord Delmore ; nay, she blamed the former as being cold and prejudiced, in withholding his approbation from one so apparently deserving it, and regretted this omission the more, as it precluded her extending to him the invitation that included a large circle of fashion at Oriel Park for the autumn. She had given various hints on the subject to Lord Oriel, but they had been received with such marked coldness, that she had not courage to persevere.

At the commencement of the season, Lady

Oriel had been continually asked to *chaperon* a daughter, sister, or niece, by friends who were as remarkable for the strictness of their principles and decorum, as for their elevated positions in society. Lord Oriel had felt flattered that his young and lovely wife was selected to fill this confidential situation. When forced by his parliamentary duties to be absent from her, he dwelt with complacency on her being attended by one or two young female friends, and remarked with pleasure, how well satisfied the young ladies appeared with the manner in which Lady Oriel discharged the duties of a chaperon.

But by degrees the demands on her to fulfil this service fell off, and at length totally ceased ; while she, unconscious of any cause for it, commented in the presence of her husband on the unaccountable estrangement of her friends, and on their confiding to others, the trust they had so often besought her to fill.

The morbid sensitiveness of Lord Oriel took fresh alarm at what he conceived to be indications of his wife's decreased estimation in the opinion of the scrupulous ladies in question, as also proof that she had ceased to merit the same respect as formerly ; hence his manner became more cold and austere than ever, and checked every approach to confidential intercourse on the part of his wife.

Lord Delmore noted all these changes, and noted them with pleasure ; for who is so egotistical and unfeeling as the heartless betrayer, who beholds the entanglement of her whom he would make his victim in the snares he has set for her, with the sensations of the spider watching some hapless fly hopelessly writhing in the meshes of its web ? He had tried repeatedly, but tried in vain, to induce Lady Oriel to open her feelings to him on the subject of her discontent with Lord

Oriel. Hints, innuendoes, all were tried ; parallel cases were described by him, the wives pitied, and the husbands decried as unworthy of such amiable victims ; but still, with the instinctive delicacy of affection, Lady Oriel shrank from exposing the dissatisfaction it was but too evident she felt ; for though disappointed in her husband, she yet loved him too well to confess to any living creature that she considered herself aggrieved by him.

This was perhaps the only prudence that now marked her conduct ; for, though the thought of guilt was still a stranger to her mind, scandal and slander were busy with her fame ; and, like many of her sex, she furnished an example that honour and fame are not synonymous, and that personal purity may be preserved when reputation, one of its best guardians, has been lost.

One of the most difficult lessons to impress on the minds of women is, the defencelessness

of fame unless prudence guards the outposts ; and, alas ! this lesson is often only acquired by the loss of that which prudence alone can preserve ; and she who has not violated the laws of virtue finds herself condemned as a criminal for having been only remiss in appearances, and has to weep over a blighted name, while the heart is still untainted.

Lady Oriel had a feminine fondness for flowers ; and few days passed in which she did not drive to some florist's, to select plants for her conservatory or a fresh bouquet for the evening. Lord Delmore knew all her haunts ; and, without anything like an assignation, from which, notwithstanding their friendship, she would have held back, he generally contrived to meet her on the road, or near the florist's, and to give her his arm while walking through the nursery-grounds or hot-houses in search of flowers. On such occasions, they had frequently encountered many of her female acquaintances,

whose coldness of manner and evident avoidance of them were too visible not to be remarked.

Lady Oriel's pride prevented her from commenting on this change to Lord Delmore ; but he failed not to draw her attention to it, by disclaiming against the envy and jealousy of her sex, which induced them to show coldness to those whose beauty and powers of pleasing left their inferior attractions immeasurably behind. He thus instilled into her unsuspecting mind the injurious belief that beauty and talent can hope for no friends among her sex ; and each new instance of coldness from her former friends was considered as an irrefragable proof of the truth of this dangerous doctrine.

Lord Delmore's saddle-horses or cabriolet were to be seen drawn up near Lady Oriel's vacant carriage at the doors of all the nursery-grounds she frequented, or the exhibitions or

galleries she visited ; and the significant smiles and sly looks exchanged by their fashionable acquaintances, nay, even by the servants, had she seen them, would have for ever humiliated the pride and delicacy of her whose unthinking imprudence, in allowing such a marked display of attentions, gave rise to them.

CHAPTER III.

“Man is an embodied paradox, a bundle of contradictions; and as some set-off against the marvellous things that he has done, we might fairly adduce the monstrous things that he has believed. The more gross the fraud, the more glibly will it go down, and the more greedily will it be swallowed, since folly will always find faith where impostors will find impudence.’

“LET me implore you, Jim dear,” said Grace, “to go no more to the meetings of the Repalers. It’s my prayer to you, and it’s the advice of the masther.”

“Indeed then, Grace, I don’t see what right the masther has to be giving me his advice,

just for all the world as if I was his slave, instead of being his tenant."

"But tell me, Jim dear, when you won't take the advice of a friend that has been so many years thried as the good masther, how come you to go headlong, as if you were blindfolded, at the bidding of the Repalers?"

"Why, Grace, didn't they tell me how bamboozled we all are? and didn't they prove it, as clear as mud, that all landlords are tyrants, and all of us slaves? They didn't, to be sure, say that the ould masther in particular was a tyrant; but, as they said, all landlords were; and sure as the masther is a landlord, he must be a tyrant, and it's our duty not to follow his bidding."

"Well, Jim, a cuishlamachree, only wait, and if ever those same Repalers that's crying out against landlords now, come to pick up their crumbs, and to have broad lands of their

own, with tenants and dependants belonging to 'em, you'll see how they'll alter. If I was to see the great estated gentlemen, who have large fortunes to lose, advising the poor ignorant people to agitate and make disturbance, I might think it worth while to listen to them, from knowing that if the poor ould counthry was ruint they would suffer the most, and it would make me think they loved freedom, as they call it, better than their great fortunes; and when that's the case, there's something mighty grand in it—something that makes my heart swell and a could tremor run up to the roots of my hair, which always happens to me when I hear of any one doing what is grand and noble. But when I know it's only a few gentlemen, followed by a pack of buckeens and spalpeens, who have more wind in their lungs than guineas in their purses, and have no fortunes to lose even if they ruin the poor ould counthry, sure

then I think to myself, if these gentry didn't do something to make a disturbance and get themselves talked of, who'd ever hear they were in the world at all at all? and one way or other they must gain by their mischief, and have nothing to lose.

“ If the Lord Leftenant takes 'em up, to stop their mischief,” pursued Grace, “ then they cry out they are parsecuted; and well they know that even if the worst men are parsecuted, it makes all the people stand up for 'em, and this gives 'em more power. If the Lord Leftenant lets them alone to go on with all their disturbance, then they say he is afraid of 'em, or wanting to make it up with 'em; so, whichever way that poor English lord acts, they'll find a plan to deçave him. Then you see, Jim, that while they're disturbing the counthry, they get all they can out of the poor people; and if they are brought up by the Lord

Leftenant, they make a good bargain too ; so *they* are sure to gain, while *we* are as certain of losing, and this is what none of ye will open your eyes to see. Now as the Repalers have got used to be followed by mobs, and to be always talked of and made a fuss about, they 'll never like to sit down quiet and aisy again as long as they live ; so I see no chance of our ever having this poor ould, throubled counthry happy, unless some plain, honest-spoken people would take the pains to show the poor people what fools and tools they 're made of to sarve the interests of a few men who are puffed up by ambition, and who would give up the counthry clear and clane to sarve their own ends.

“ Well, Jim honey, little I ever thought that I 'd be turning my thoughts to such matthers ; nor would I, if I didn't see the madness of the poor good-hearted fools about me ; and above all, Jim, if I didn't see you

ready to believe the rhaumeish of the Re-
palers against the proofs before your own
eyes.—Will you tell, me, Jim, oncet for all,
what is a tyrant?”

“ Sure, Grace, a tyrant is a great budoch
who makes his tenants pay their rints to him,
and thries to prevent ’em attending ’sociations,
and is always for forcing his advice on ’em
whether they like it or no.”

“ Och, Jim, if that ’s all that a tyrant is,
I don’t think any one need mind being called
a tyrant; faith, myself thought it was some-
thing terrible, and was quite vexed at hear-
ing the dear ould masther called so, but now
I see it means no harm. Was it the Re-
palers that tould you this maning of the
word, Jim?”

“ No, Grace, it was myself; for as this is
all I ever saw our landlord do, and they call
him tyrant, sure this must be the maning.”

“ Jim a-vourneen, isn't it a terrible thing that words, turned and twisted against the right maning, should have power to unsettle the raison of them that have more hearts in their bodies than brains in their heads. 'Tis only necessary for the Repalers to come down on your ears with a few high-sounding wicked names, and ye are all on fire, never stopping to enquire if those to whom they give such names deserve 'em. Does not all the world think that a *tyrant* is the strongest term of reproach that can be given to any man in power? and doesn't even the feelings of a woman rise up in anger against it? And when the Repalers use it against those that Providence has placed over ye, are ye not worked up to madness, and ready to commit any crime against 'em? But then when in cool blood ye reflect on all ye know of your landlords, and can't find any act of cruelty or wickedness, ye

then begin to think that the word itself can't be so bad as ye thought, merely bekase ye don't find the badness in those to whom those bad names are tacked. Jim dear, you think that I'm tame, and too quiet to bear up with courage against bad usage; you think that I'd be afraid of a rael tyrant, if I had the misfortune to meet with one. But you're mistaken; for, weak and feeble as I am, not all the tyrants on the earth could make me do what was against my own sense of honesty and principle; and I'd submit with all the courage and patience I could, to support whatever punishment they might heap on me, so as that I had the comfort of thinking I was doing what I believed was right in the sight of God, and that my conscience was satisfied."

"Faith, Grace, the difference between you and me is, that the right notions or principles, as you call 'em, is wrote down in large letters

with black ink in your mind, and can't be rubbed out, but they're only slightly marked with a pencil in mine, and the least thing takes 'em away, more's the pity, and the sin too for me to be so wake. But you see asthore, no passions but gentle loving ones come into your head, to rub against your principles, though I believe even if they did you would resist ; but many strong and evil passions come into mine, and my principles melt away before 'em like butter before a fire, or a lump of ice in a warm hand. Besides, Grace, you never yet heard the greatest of the Repalers spake ; sure, if you did, it would make a difference. When that man stands up, and his wide chest seems to grow wider and wider, and as he spakes he grows taller and taller, and the strong firm voice of him sends out the big words in a manner so earnest, that one is plaised with the very sound, without examin-

ing the sense, (though sure there can't be a want of sense in words that moves and madens hundreds, ay, and thousands) you'd be moved yourself, Grace a-vourneen, like me, and feel ready to do all he told you."

" Maybe I would, Jim, for Iown that there is something very grand in hearing big thoughts, which sure is a gift from God, coming from the mind in big words that matches 'em ; and if the great Repaler turned the big thoughts and the big words to stamp notions of honesty, dacency, and respect for the laws, on the minds of those whom he can so easily move, I'd look on him as one that ought to be approached with reverence, as using the gift of God for the benefit of his fellow creatures. But at present I look on him as I would on a mountain stream, swollen by rains, rushing down and overpowering all that it meets in its passage, bekase its force is too much increased to

allow it to keep in its own place. Instead of doing good, it destroys ; and though grand, its grandeur is awful and alarming, and more to be feared than admired."

CHAPTER IV.

“ Oh, God ! my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all man’s honour,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth
Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,
And villainous jests, and blasphemies obscene ;
While sneering nobles, in more polish’d guise,
Whisper’d the tale, and smiled upon the lie.”

LADY ORIEL, with that infatuation which often accompanies a consciousness of talents, was the more easily led to believe the assertions of her artful admirer, that the coldness of her female friends proceeded from envy and jealousy, excited by her superior attractions.

This belief led her to assume a *fierté* of manner towards them, which increased their animadversions on her conduct. They might have overlooked much greater levity in a woman who sought to disarm their criticisms by courting their society ; but, seeing her assume a still higher tone, which she did from a consciousness of her own innocence, and what she considered their inferiority, (proved as she imagined by their mean jealousy and envy,) they became still more vehement in their censures, and less charitable in their conclusions.

Her select receptions on Wednesdays, hitherto the very focus of fashion, into which all its rays were merged, now became “ fine by degrees, and beautifully less,” until the society was reduced to so limited a number, that it seldom amounted to more than seven or eight persons ; of which five were males, and not the *élite* of her former circle,

but the tolerated portion of it. Lord Oriel looked in occasionally on such evenings, and his face assumed a paler hue, and his glance more severity, when, having passed through the splendid suite of illuminated rooms, he found his lovely wife with her small, but no longer select, circle, of which Lord Delmore appeared the hero, being so far superior to the other men present, that he could not fail to appear to great advantage by the contrast.

The love of crowds is one of the besetting sins of the English of all ranks; and this was never more clearly proved than in the case of Lady Oriel. Three parts of her guests came to her house to meet the fourth, and now stayed away because there was no longer a host—

“ Mocking the desert they themselves had made.”

The few who attended, talked of some former satellite of Lady Oriel who had now chosen

her Wednesdays ; the new aspirant building her chance of becoming a leader of *haut ton* on the ruins of the temple of the deity hitherto so worshipped : and the fallen goddess discovered with a pang, that all her consciousness of superiority could not assuage the vexation she experienced in hearing the names of some of the most brilliant of “ those her former bounty fed,” as among the deserters to the camp of the enemy.

It had been settled, before the attentions of Lord Delmore became conspicuous, that two young ladies, one the daughter of the Duchess of Derwent, and the other the heiress of the house of Heaviland, were to leave London with Lady Oriel, and to remain with her for two months. Cold apologies stating a change of places, came from the mothers of both ; and two of the most distinguished of the invited male visitors, on discovering this defection, made their excuses.

It was about this period that Lord Oriel, having returned from the House of Lords one night, and having looked into the drawing-rooms, retired by a private staircase to his library to write some letters; and while thus occupied, was disturbed by the sounds of angry voices in the vestibule. He was on the point of ringing to enquire the cause of the clamour, when the names of Lady Oriel and Lord Delmore being repeated with vehemence, he recognized the voice of an Irish footman, whose violence of temper had been made known to him on a former occasion, but whose promises of amendment had induced the *maître-d'hôtel* to intercede for his pardon. With the exuberance of language peculiar to his excitable countrymen, now increased by ebriety, he proclaimed aloud his disbelief of the aspersions cast on the honour of his lady by the footman of Lord Delmore. He defied him to single combat, and in the true spirit of vulgar

recrimination, accused Lord Delmore of being a wily deceiver, who came into happy families to disturb their peace.

In vain the footman of Lord Delmore, trembling with fear of punishment, apologized, explained, and urged the Hibernian to silence. The irascible champion,—though commanded to retire by the *maître-d'hôtel*,—aided in the support of his official duties by the groom of the chambers and butler,—continued to vociferate invectives against Lord Delmore, mingled with vulgar and humiliating defences for his Lady, until he was dragged from the vestibule by the other servants, lest the noise should be heard in the drawing-rooms; where they supposed their Lord as well as Lady to be.

As the most clear and sparkling water cannot pass through an impure vessel without being sullied, so the reputation of a woman cannot be made the subject of menial conversation without losing its original purity. Vul-

gar and uneducated minds are incapable of judging their superiors. The fine gradations, and almost imperceptible lines of demarcation, between apparent error and actual guilt, are altogether invisible to them. A sympathy of habits and feelings renders persons of equal station capable of appreciating motives and drawing conclusions from circumstances which the coarse-minded and ignorant cannot comprehend ; who, judging from self, the only criterion known to them, hesitate not to attribute guilt where indiscretion alone exists. The utmost malice of the refined never extended to one-half the length in its conclusions, to which servants, without any malice, continually go in theirs ; and many a high-born and innocent woman has been by her domestics believed capable of actions, the bare suspicion of which would have filled her with dismay and horror. But they had deduced their opinions wholly from the laxity of their own

moral feelings, without any malice towards her.

Little did the noble-minded, delicate Lady Oriel imagine, that the indiscreet intimacy which she had allowed to subsist between herself and Lord Delmore, had become for weeks the subject of a thousand gross pleasantries, hints, and innuendoes, among the lower servants in their respective establishments. Her name had become familiar in their rude mouths, her husband's a jest, and her supposed lover was considered by them as a monstrous clever fellow, who knew what he was about. The upper servants, more reserved, though equally suspicious, expressed not what they thought; but, contented themselves with narrowly observing and internally commenting on all that they observed, wondering at the courage of their lady, who took no pains to conceal the intimacy, as though she had never

attached any idea of impropriety to it. But the cordiality of her *accueil* to Lord Delmore, and the frequency of his visits, confirmed them in the most erroneous and injurious conclusions; while she, unsuspecting and pure-minded, dreamed not of the dishonourable and odious light in which she was viewed by them.

What the feelings of Lord Oriel were, on hearing the degrading defence, and the accusation that led to it, is more easily imagined than described. He became for a few minutes transfixed, as it were, to the spot; a tremor shook his limbs; and anger, pride, and deeply-wounded delicacy, strove for mastery in his breast. A few moments' reflection induced him to steal softly from the library; having previously arranged the papers on the table, and extinguished the light, so as not to have it imagined that he had been there. He ascended his private staircase with noiseless step, and it was a relief

to him to hear the sounds of music proceeding from the drawing-room,—though they ill accorded with his present feelings, — as it convinced him that the clamour in the vestibule had not been heard in the salons. He turned from the sounds, and sought the privacy of his dressing-room, to brood over the “food for meditation even to madness,” which the scene he had overheard had engendered.

Bitter were the pangs that shot through his heart, when he thought of his beautiful and worshipped Louisa as the subject of the comments and calumnies of servants. How did she appear shorn of her beams, and her purity blotted by what he had heard ! The stain on his own personal honour,—and few could be so sensitively alive to such a stain as was this high-born and high-bred aristocrat,—seemed even less shocking to him than the degradation of her he so loved and honoured. Anger rose to

repel the blow aimed at *his* respectability ; but tears, of almost feminine softness, wept the insult that was heaped on her he would have died to shield, even from a glance of disrespect ; and whose fair fame, now blurred over by the tongues of vile menials, he could not vindicate or avenge. How did he wish, with the passionate affliction of a high mind unaccustomed to give way to violence, that the accuser and defender of his wife were of a rank which could enable him to meet them in the field, where their lives should atone for their accursed profanation, or his own death release him from the agony it had entailed upon him !

At one moment, he thought of opening the eyes of his wife, as he felt the absolute necessity of at once putting an end to her acquaintance with Lord Delmore ; but the next, found him shrinking with disgust at the idea of her humiliation at the disclosure, and the dread

that, with her keen sense of pride, this humiliation would chase away for ever all softer and warmer feelings towards him. Lord Oriel never for a moment doubted the actual innocence of his wife; but he had often, and sorely, felt her want of *retenue* in her *liaison* with Lord Delmore, and the impropriety of a married woman forming any friendships with men, of which her husband was not the connecting link or medium.

With an agitated mind and feverish body, he acknowledged the impossibility of encountering Lady Oriel until he had come to some final decision. His ideas were in a chaos; he seized his pen to write to her, but threw it away in despair at the first few incoherent words it traced. Never had he written to her before except with a heart overflowing with love and affection. But now — what a change! A thousand bitter, but tender emotions overwhelmed him as he looked

back on the past. The lovely and trusting bride, who had preferred him to all others, was present to his imagination; the charms of infancy in her person scarcely rivalled by those of womanhood; and then "the wife still dearer than the bride," the fond, the happy, confiding partner of his happiest days, stood before him in all her beauty. The present, the fearful present, was for a few minutes forgotten in the past.

But soon came back the bitter recollection, and with it the reproachful question, how had he fulfilled his duties to the lovely object confided to his care? Had he warned her before danger found her? or had he shielded or advised her when it had? Alas! no; he owned with mortal anguish that he left her in the path of danger; from which, though she might escape with an unsullied person, she could not bear away an unspotted reputation.

All this his guilty neglect now struck him with keen self-reproach ; but such was the devotedness of his love, that it was a relief to him to accumulate blame on himself, that a less portion might fall on her ; and he felt that she had more right to upbraid *him* than he had to censure *her*.

Let no one say that true affection is egotistical, because a few pretenders to love are selfish. No ; egotism proves at once the absence of love.

CHAPTER V.

“ The flying rumours gather’d as they roll’d ;
Scarce any tale was sooner heard or told ;
And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargement too ;
In every ear it spread, on every tongue it grew.”

LORD ORIEL passed the night in feverish slumbers, reclining in a bergère ; and was awakened by the shrill tones of Mademoiselle La Tour, the *femme de chambre* of his wife, who was in the dressing-room of her mistress, with which his room communicated. La Tour, between occasional sobs and angry tirades against Monsieur Henri, *le valet de pied de Milord Delmore*, and

with the *brusquerie* and want of tact that is a distinguishing characteristic in her countrywomen of that class, when once their anger is excited, stated, that *certainement ce vilain Henri* did say to Monsieur Jacques, *le valet de pied de Miladi, que Milord Delmore est l'amant de Miladi. Imaginez vous, miladi, quelle horreur! et malgré que je n'en crois rien, c'est toujours bien désagréable pour nous tous,*" including, with a true French feeling of equality, herself with her lady in the *Nous tous*.

Her volubility met with no check, until a slight noise, and an exclamation of "*Ah, mon Dieu! elle se trouve mal!*" made Lord Oriel forget all but that the person dearest to him on earth was suffering. He rushed into the room, and found Lady Oriel extended on her *chaise longue*, and to all appearance dead. Her face had all the rigidity and snowy whiteness of marble; her dark eyelashes, resting on those

pale cheeks, gave them a still more death-like aspect; her raven hair fell in wild disorder over her figure, rendering it more touching; and the total prostration of moral and physical force which her whole appearance betrayed, showed the violence of the shock that had subdued her.

To bathe her temples, to apply pungent odours to her nostrils, and to chafe her icy hands within his own, were the work of a moment; but it was many minutes ere returning animation repaid the anxious and agitated husband's cares. During which time, with the usual bustling helplessness of those of her country and station, La Tour wept, scolded, and bemoaned her destiny; by turns recommending *un peu d'eau de Cologne sur du sucre—une goutte de fleur d'orange dans l'eau—une tasse de tilleul, avec une cuillerée de syrop de violettes*; and, having exhausted her catalogue of a French-

woman's remedies in all similar cases, without Lord Oriel's showing any desire of trying their efficacy, she murmured to herself, taking care that it should not be loud enough to be heard by him, "*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! comme ces Anglais sont bêtes et entêtés!*"

A slight tinge of rose on the pale cheeks, and a deep sigh, marked Lady Oriel's return to life and consciousness. She opened her languid eyes, and seeing her husband tenderly occupied about her, closed them with a shudder that threatened a renewal of the attack. He addressed her by the fondest terms of endearment; disguising all his own misery in the hope of alleviating what he knew she must feel. Having dismissed La Tour, who unwillingly and sulkily departed, he succeeded in restoring Lady Oriel to something like a state of calmness; though the wild glance that first shrank from his when she opened her eyes, was now exchanged for

the expression of mute, hopeless, and fixed despair. She suffered his attentions with an air of deep humility, as though she felt she was no longer worthy of them; and his manly heart bled for her, when he witnessed the mental anguish that was expressed in every look.

Lady Oriel believed that her husband was still ignorant of the cause of her sudden indisposition; and the tenderness of his manner, so unlike the cold constraint that had marked it for the last few months, awakened the deep love that had lately slumbered in her breast, but which had only slumbered to awaken with renewed force. But at what a moment did it awaken! Her indiscretion had brought dishonour on his name, had been the cause of the alienation of friends, the coldness of acquaintances! All—all was now revealed to her; and she was dismayed when the fearful reality of her po-

sition was exposed to the scrutiny of her alarmed, too lately alarmed, sensitiveness.

How did this favourite of fortune, blessed with all that can render life desirable, now wish that the grave should hide her repentance and her shame!—Alas! we seldom think of death, until life is embittered by our errors, and when we are least fit to encounter it! Lady Oriel dared not contemplate the probable results of her conduct, and yet she dreaded the results less than she execrated the cause; for she now saw the unthinking folly of her perseverance in permitting attentions which the coldness of her husband's manner had proved that he condemned.

Lord Oriel's delicacy and forbearance now presented themselves to her in brilliant colours, and in proportion to her admiration of them became her self-condemnation. Pride, that arch enemy, which avenges itself unmercifully when we err, yet cannot preserve us from

erring, was up in arms in her breast, to oppose the flood of tenderness and deep sense of humiliation which threatened to overpower it. At one moment, she thought of proposing to Lord Oriel to retire to the country, to the Continent, any where, to escape from the scene of her present degradation; hoping that he might be kept in ignorance of the reports to her disadvantage, for that such reports were in general circulation, she no longer allowed herself to doubt. The next moment, she determined to avow all to Lord Oriel, to throw herself on his tenderness and mercy, and to pass the rest of her life in endeavouring to atone for her faults.

She requested Lord Oriel to leave her to a few hours' repose; though of even this temporary blessing, she felt she had at the present crisis but little hope. When consigned to the solitude of her chamber, she communed

with her own heart; and, while tears of contrition and despair fell over her paper, she communicated to him the result of her reflections, in the following letter:—

“ How shall I address you, most beloved and most injured of men? how find courage to tell you, that my levity and fatal indiscretion have brought blight and dishonourable suspicion on your name? that name never before sullied by the searching breath of scandal—that noble name which you gave to me with confidence, and in which I gloried! You—you alone, understand me, and can believe that, though exposed to suspicion, I am incapable of guilt. Think of the bitterness of heart with which I avow this, and knowing that in public opinion I am dishonoured, I still live, and live to wound your peace with this fatal avowal. Friends have fallen off from me; acquaintances

have deserted me; and you, too, whom I have so cruelly injured—your kindness and forbearance rises up in judgment to add to the misery I feel, when I reflect that I have brought your spotless name even to be the topic of your own menials.

“ Why, oh! why did a false pride prevent me from seeking the cause of the coldness that has for the last few months marked your manner towards me? All would have then been explained, and this wretchedness would have been spared me. But no; I shut my eyes to the danger that menaced me, and, never dreaming of crime, disgrace has overtaken me. My own dishonour I might bear, supported by the consciousness of innocence; but to draw shame on you! no—that I cannot bear and live. We must separate, though despair is in the thought; but never shall it be said that you were the dupe of her whom you so loved

and trusted. My innocence can never be made manifest to the world; and while it is doubted—nay, more than doubted—can I suffer you to be pointed at by the finger of scorn for sheltering one who has, in losing her good name, forfeited all right to such a boon? I will retire to some solitary place, where a life of the most circumspect prudence shall at least preclude the possibility of future scandal, though it cannot atone for past indiscretion.—Try to forget and pardon me.

“ Little did I think, a short time ago, that I should ever have to ask you to do either!—But let me not dwell on the past, or how shall I bear the present? I dare no longer give expression to an affection that must appear suspicious, if not worthless, when it could not preserve her who professes it from the cruel necessity of signing herself

“ Your unworthy wife,

“ LOUISA ORIEL.”

Various and agitating were the feelings and thoughts which passed through the mind of Lord Oriel during the hours of seclusion which succeeded his departure from his wife's dressing-room. He never for a moment contemplated the idea of a separation from her; though the vulnerable part of his character, extreme pride, was painfully wounded by his anticipations of all that would be said and thought of his continuing to live with a wife whose reputation was so tarnished.

But love, at length, triumphed over every other feeling in Lord Oriel's heart, and he awaited with fear and trembling the next interview with his wife; on which he felt hung the peace of his future life, because on her conduct on this trying occasion depended his esteem.

“Now,” thought Lord Oriel, “is the crisis of my fate. If she, believing that I am igno-

rant of it, conceals her position, how can I esteem her again? and yet, so naturally proud is her spirit, if she humiliate herself too deeply, may I not lose her affection in her own too vivid consciousness of her self-abasement?"

Her letter was brought to him while all these reflections were passing in his mind; and in the various sentiments of love, admiration, and pity every line of it excited, he forgot all, but the certainty it conveyed that her attachment was undiminished and the purity of her mind unimpaired. The opinion of the world faded away before the tenderness with which his heart overflowed; and when he sought Lady Oriel, the timidity of a lover was more evident in his manner, than the forgiveness of a husband. His arguments and reasoning were too flattering to her love and to her pride, to be resisted. She felt that a separation from him would steep her future years in misery; but she shrank in

dismay at the thought, that when the excitement of the moment was over, he might quail before the strictures of the clique, whose flats had hitherto had so much influence on his mind, and regret the sacrifice to affection that he was now making.

Dearly has that woman expiated her errors, when she feels that the protection a husband affords her, may subject him to the contumely of the world! This dread was rooted in the sensitive heart of Lady Oriel, never again to depart; but it lent new charms to her manner towards him; and the gentleness, the beseeching love that each look and action displayed, originating in the self-reproach and humiliation which preyed on her health and peace, only rendered her, both mentally and personally, more exquisitely interesting.

Mingled tears, mutual self-reproaches, and renewed fondness, marked the reconciliation

of Lord and Lady Oriel; they vowed to be all the world to each other, as in the first days of their married life; when in the happy seclusion of Oriel Park, they wished never to leave it. They thought not then of the world, because they feared it not; and their indifference was a triumphant proof of their affection, because that world held forth to them all its smiles. But now, both shrank from its powers, for both had learned to dread them. It was no longer an admiring but a censuring world from which they were secluding themselves; and bitter were the secret thoughts of each, as they reflected that while returning to the path of duty, and devoting themselves to domestic life, they were drawing down the sarcasms of that world which they had not yet learned to estimate at its just price.

In trying to assuage their mutual feelings, each became continually aware of the futility of

the effort. In praising retirement, they were conscious of the weighty motives both had to seek it; and their delicacy taking the alarm, mutual constraint ensued.

Ma'm'selle La Tour was discharged with a liberal present; the whole establishment was dismissed, with generous remunerations for their services; and Lord and Lady Oriel commenced their tour to the Lakes, more devoted than ever to each other; but the very excess of that devotion produced increased sensitiveness, and dread of the future.

Had Lord Oriel possessed strength of mind in proportion to his pride and tenderness of heart, happiness might again have dawned on them; but alas! he was infirm of purpose, and, though not prepared to sacrifice his love to the world, he was nearly equally unprepared to confront that world in the discharge of conscious duties, while he thought his actions likely

to be misinterpreted, or the finger of scorn pointed at his name. He had too much and too little pride; too much to be satisfied with aught less than the world's applause, and too little to be able to bear up against its tyranny and injustice.

Lady Oriel had failed to make this discovery in happier times; but it now came home to her bosom, making her dread the present, and tremble for the future, as she saw that the world, the fickle capricious world, which she had neither the courage nor the wish to re-conquer, still held an empire over the mind of her husband, which would render happiness, independent of its opinion, difficult if not impossible to attain.

It has been well observed by an acute writer of our day, that “to be satisfied with the acquittal of the world, though accompanied with the secret condemnation of conscience, is the mark of a little mind; but that it requires

a soul of no common stamp to be satisfied with its *own* acquittal, and to despise the condemnation of the world." The insufficiency of self-acquittal to satisfy the mind, must proceed from the consciousness that, however innocent in fact, we have been faulty in appearance; unjust as the world is, it can seldom wound us if we do not furnish it with weapons. The world exaggerates, and misinterprets, but rarely invents. We must lay a foundation ere it can build; but when once we have furnished it, there is no saying to what height the edifice will extend; and she who has committed one fault, must expect to be accused of a hundred crimes.

"*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.*" In the life of a woman, one false step that cannot be disproved, renders every future step suspected; and the heart-wounding conviction of this injustice takes away the confidence of virtue, even long after its duties have been fulfilled.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead ;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose.”

“ Some, for renown, on scraps of learning doat,
And think they grow immortal as they quote.”

JIM CASSIDY returned from his work one evening, bringing with him the schoolmaster of the village, whom he had encountered on the road, and engaged to share his humble supper.

Grace felt that he did this to avoid a *tête-à-tête* with her, and sighed as she thought of other days, when Jim would have considered

such an interruption on their privacy a hardship.

The schoolmaster was a simple, honest man, only remarkable for a habit of interlarding his discourse with scraps of Latin, even when addressing those totally ignorant of that language, which habit generally left his hearers in doubt as to one-half of his conversation, and not quite *au fait* of the other.

They were about to sit down to supper, when Larry M'Swiggan made an addition to the party, and was cordially greeted by all.

"I'm afraid you don't like the supper," said Jim, observing that the schoolmaster was more intent on looking around him than on eating.

"Why, to spake the truth, Mither Cassidy," replied the pedagogue, "I am admiring *domus et placens uxor*."

"I see how it is," said Larry, with an arch

smile. "You were looking at Misthress Cassidy, and by speaking Latin, show that it was something she ought not to hear. Far be it from me to say, even in a dead language, what could offend a living ear, and that ear, moreover, attached to the head of a female."

"No, Misther M'Swiggan, I was thinking, on looking around me, that *fas est et ab hoste doceri*, as I remark many clever contrivances in this culinary apartment, which Misthress Cassidy must have taken from the English."

"Why, then, be my soul, if you knew her as well as I do, ever since she was a brat of a girl, and before too, you 'd never be after suspecting her of taking any thing from the English, or any one else, but what was her right."

"You misconceive my maning, Misther M'Swiggan."

"Well, all my mistakes come from your spaking the Greek, which as neither the good

man nor woman of the house understand any more than I do, it bothers us a little, and puts us at cross purposes. Sure, it's no offence I mane to you, for I used just to say the same to a Frenchman on board the ship with me, going to the West Indies, who was always for jabbering his outlandish lingo to me. 'Sir,' says I, 'if as how you're inclined to swap thoughts with me, take your choice of spaking Irish or English, which you'll find come just as aisy to you, as having to conster my words into your own mother tongue, which I suspect you'll be obliged to do before you know the maning.' He shook his head, and said, 'Bait.' 'Bait!' says I; 'faith, that's a game two can play at, and if I had you in my own sweet counthry, where baiting is chaip, I'd see what you were made of.' Sure, he knew well enough what I was after, for he looked as mad as a March hare, and after that

we never swapped a word while we stopped in the ship."

"I think, Misther Cassidy, that your friend has a *cacoethes loquendi*," observed the school-master.

"I hope you haven't said anything affronting to me," said Larry; "for ould as I am, I wouldn't sit by to see myself attacked; and, sure, if you have anything to say to me, spake out in plain English or Irish, and don't be like a backbiter, saying what's not fair when my back is turned, for sure it's all one as being absent when I don't know what you say of me."

"I declare to you, Misther M'Swiggan, that I have said nothing offensive. I am not disposed to quarrel, being, as you must observe, the *caput mortuum* of a sexagenarian."

"Well, there's more of it," said Larry. "Follow on, my ould boy, for I see it's useless

to thry to stop you once you've got flounder-
ing in your bog Latin."

"Misther M'Swiggan, if you main to insult
the erudition of which I am but as the mouth-
piece, I'd have you to know that *contra stimu-
lum calcas*."

"You see, Misther and Misthress Cassidy,
he will keep throwing his bad words in my
teeth; for, sure, as I said before, if they are
not bad, why not say 'em out like a man,
instead of disguising 'em in clothes, as he
says himself, which I can't make head or tail
of?"

"I repate, Misther M'Swiggan," replied the
pedagogue, "that I do not wish to offend; of
this you have only my *ipse dixit*, which I hope
you will accept."

"Och! sure, if you're tipsy it's another
matther," said Larry. "Why didn't you say
so at first? though, faith, I thought you looked

a little cumflustered, and seemed dumb-founded by spaking Greek and Latin to us all the evening, just to show your book-larning.”

The schoolmaster felt by no means inclined to allow Larry M'Swiggan to continue in the belief that he pleaded inebriation as an excuse for whatever he might have said, and Grace was obliged to interfere, to bring them to a good understanding; which having accomplished, the schoolmaster declared that he must proceed to the Cat and Bagpipes, for the purpose of exhorting the men there assembled, and of opening their eyes to the danger of the evil courses they were at present pursuing.

“Faith,” said Larry, “if you main to do that, I ’d advise you stick to the plain English, or, what ’s betther still, the Irish tongue, which is ten times as expressive,—then they ’ll know your maning; but if you bother ’em with the Greek and Latin, faith, you might just as well

be whistling jigs to a milestone, in the hopes of making it dance."

"I have already arranged the discourse I main to give them," said the pedagogue. "I have no doubt it will produce a powerful effect on their unsophisticated understandings."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Larry. "Sure, they 're already much too fisticated, as you call it, for it's a word and a blow with 'em on every occasion, and the blow first and the word afther. Sure, it would be well for many of 'em that they had no fists, for they do nothing but mischief with 'em; but if you 're going, I'll just go with you, and maybe tell you what you had best say to 'em."

"*Cæcus iter monstrare vult*," murmured the schoolmaster.

"There he is at it again," said Larry. "I'm no more a monsther than yourself, and it is not over-mannerly of you to call me so."

“ I perçaiue that if we continue to talk,” said the schoolmaster, “ it will be a *bellum internecivum* between us ; but let us proceed to the Cat and Bagpipes, Misther M‘Swiggan. I shall be proud of your company on the way, for *comes jucundus in viâ pro vehiculo est.*”

Jim Cassidy accompanied them to the scene of meeting, promising Grace that he would retire from it as soon as the schoolmaster had finished his speech to ‘em. “ For I ‘m curious,” added Jim, “ to see how they ‘ll take advice in Latin, which they can’t understand, when they won’t listen, or at least won’t mind, what’s said to them in their own tongue ; perhaps, for the raison that they can’t understand, they ‘ll pay more attention to it, for, somehow or other, we poor Irish are a little contrary whin we’ve got a quare notion in our heads.”

Grace smiled at the truth of the last observation, and the three friends departed.

On reaching the sheebean-house, sounds of merriment and singing, with loud applauses, proclaimed that there was a full meeting, and they entered in time to hear the following song sung, or rather roared, by Bill Davin, better known by the appellation of "Rattling Bill," each verse of which elicited thunders of applause.

SONG.

Sure, ain't we all slaves in the chains
We've taken such trouble to get ?
Ould England's the cause of our pains,
But she'll suffer the penalty yet.

We'll drive all the rich from the land,
And set up the poor in their stead ;
By O'Blarney we'll all of us stand,
By O'Blarney we'll only be led.

For he is the broth of a boy ;
How to get up a row he knows well ;
In Parliament, sure, 'tis his joy
To bother their brains all pell-mell.

We tried long enough with troubles
The English to vex and enrage ;
They thought our riots but bubbles,
Till they found we 'd open war wage.

Boys ! drink to the great agitator,
And long may he rule o'er the land,
For he is the only dictator,
And by him till death will we stand.

The vociferous plaudits that followed the song had no sooner subsided, than the schoolmaster asked permission to address the meeting, which was accorded by some of the assembly and refused by others. At length, however, it was decided that he should be heard. " We know he is an ould tory," said rattling Bill, " but what of that ? Hear him, hear him, say I ;" and it was accordingly agreed that he should be heard.

" Neighbours and pupils, for many of you are my pupils," said the schoolmaster, " I am come here amongst you, like a *brutum fulmen*,

to arouse you to the dangers that threaten you. Led on by a man who is ever seeking the *aura popularis*, you will pass the Rubicon, after which there is no retreat. He is determined to be *aut Cæsar aut nullus*, and to arrive at the former, he will make you the pedestal on which he will elevate himself. But remember, in doing this, he tramples on you; you but support his feet. He is a man who only uses arguments *ad captandum vulgus*, and is eminently skilled to *ambiguas in vulgum spargere voces*. But you, my countrymen, who are *adscriptus glebæ*, must never forget the proverb, *An nescis longas regibus esse manus?* I would prove to you that which is so rare, an *amicus certus in re incertâ cernitur*. Listen to me, therefore, not only with your ears, but your hearts, for if the ear hears and the heart heeds not, all arguments are vain.

“ I am actuated by an *amor patriæ*, and

would oppose my feeble voice against him who proves the verity of the old adage, *asperius nihil est humili cum surgit in altum*. I would call it *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*, but to be sacrificed on the altar of ambition for the aggrandisement of one man—no, this I could not bear. This man has established the system of *divide et impera*, and takes advantage of the power it gives him; he considers you all but as the *fax populi*, to be thrown to the winds the moment he has used you. But before *jacta est alea*, reflect on the inevitable consequences of following his pernicious counsels, and remember that *gravis ira regum semper*. Poor and lowly as I am, I have *incoctum generoso pectus honesto*, and I would die sooner than be as those who *iras et verba locant*.”

“Hear, hear, hear him,” was repeated aloud; “sure what he says must be fine, for we can’t

understand the half of it. He baits out O'Blarney by three chalks. Faith, the ould boy is a grand scholar any way."

Larry M'Swiggan was mortified with the success of the schoolmaster, and still more at the folly of his countrymen for applauding, merely because they could not understand. Poor Larry, with all his shrewdness, was too simple to be aware how many orators and literary works are judged of and approved on the same principle, and with this ignorance he thought to himself—"Well, after such applause, the ould boy will spake more Greek and Latin than ever, and there'll be no bearing with him. Now, if I was to spake plain sinse to 'em in plain English, it's ten to one if they'd listen to me, and more than ten to one if they'd give a single screech for me. But this comes of his book larning. Sure after all, it's a great help at a pinch, espe-

cially when it taches a body to spake with the thoughts and words of another, and no one can contradict it."

When order was restored, the schoolmaster resumed his speech; "Think not, my countrymen, that I am insensible to the misfortunes under which this divided country has groaned for centuries. Alas! *longa est injuria, longæ ambages*. But it is not by proving that we are unworthy of liberty, that we can hope to gain it. As well might the maniac try to persuade his keeper that he requires not the fetters that alone prevent his injuring himself and others, as for us to expect that government will grant us the rights we forfeit by our own violation of the laws. I can have no object but the *amor patriæ*, which throbs in my heart, for urging you to beware of evil advisers, whilst he who inflames your passions has twelve thousand golden reasons for keeping

up the heat of that mint that pays his agitation. But cursed is the gold that is earned by the misery of the people, and shameless must he be, who, while he declaims on the poverty and ruin of his country, accepts from that poverty and ruin the hire of acts that, if performed with sincere good-will for his country, he ought to be above receiving pay for, and if not, what shall be said of him ?

“ Paid patriots, my countrymen, are anomalies that I admit not of ; I will believe him to be a patriot who struggles against poverty and oppression, and disdains to accept wages for services that never can, never ought to be paid. Of him who does otherwise it may be said, *vendidit hic auro patriam* ; for what difference does it make that the gold comes from the sold ? the chapman equally receives it.

“ I would exhort you to pause and reflect. Return to your duties, and *ut ameris amabilis*

esto. Show that you *can* be trusted, and you will be trusted. Show that you know how to respect the laws, and you will not long be exposed to know them by their severity, instead of by their protection. *Nunquam libertas gratior extat quàm sub rege pio*. And when did a monarch sit on a throne more worthy to be so considered than ours? Let us not, my dear countrymen, force him to show us his power instead of his paternal love, nor compel him to give us the *ultima ratio regum*. Leave our grievances to be remedied by those who have the inclination to relieve, and the knowledge how to accomplish it; but attend not to him who, if we have wounds, puts an *unguis in ulcere*."

"Faith, the ould boy is right," said one.
"The ould scholar is no fool," said another.
"Sure how could he be a fool with such fine larning as he has in his head?" interrogated a

third. "If I had only the half of it, I'd speechify as well as the best of 'em, but when a body has only one's own thoughts in one's pate, sure how can one make a speech?"

Rattling Bill was the first to address the schoolmaster, which he did in the following terms:—"Well, ould boy, you have been chopping Latin for some time, and we've listened to you for all the world as if you were a prophet, though small profit it has brought us any way, for we didn't understand the half of it. So much the better, perhaps, for I see by the drift of your shanahos, you'd be for thrying to persuade us to remain quiet till them English fitted on our handcuffs. Now, I'm of the same mind as O'Blarney, that the only way to avoid danger, is to meet it halfway, and sure we've been more than halfway on the road to meet it, and now is not the time to turn our backs on

ourselves. And let me ax you, what would we do to pass the time, if we didn't kick up a bit of a row? Sure it's the only occupation we have, and if we like to give our money to him that divarts us, and keeps us always warm with the fiery things he puts into our minds, that's our own affair. Sure, I've heard that the grandees find time so dull on their hands, that they pay lashings of money to play-actors to agitate 'em, either by making 'em laugh or cry; and why shouldn't we pay our own play-actor, who can do both, and prevents our ever bothering ourselves about thinking of paying rints or tithes, or providing for the wives and brats at home, which we used to be breaking our heads and hearts too, to prepare for? No, no, O'Blarney has taught us a trick worth two of that, and I'm for sticking by him let what will happen. When I think how, before I knew O'Blarney, I used to be bothering the

life out of myself, sure, faith I laugh at my folly ; for now when the agent talks to me of the next gale of rent, I think that may be there 'll be another sort of a gale before that comes, that will blow away rents, landlords, and agents too, and lave us, like the wreckers on the shore, to pick up whatever escapes from the ship that has perished ; so you 'll find we 'll have the best of it."

" But when you see the soldiers and the police pouring down on us like a mountain floud, sweeping everything before 'em," said an old man who had not before spoken, " what will you say then? when our wives and children are starving and unprotected, and ourselves between four walls in a stone jug,* where we may be found morning, noon, and night, and obliged to stand our trials for all the troubles we 've brought on the country, sure,

* An Irish phrase for jail.

Bill, you'll wish you had hearkened to the schoolmaster's advice, and if you're transported to Botany Bay, or are condemned to dance a jig upon nothing, 'twill then be too late to repent. Think of the judge putting on the black cap—think of the terrible words he will spake, the solemn faces of all the court, and the wail of the heart-broken wife; and then ax yourself how much better it would be to stop in time. Think also of the terrible night in the condemned cell—the last night. A disgraceful death the passport to an offended God—the horror of the present—the terror of the future—the grief of all who love you, and the shame you leave 'em. Ah, if you would think of all this, you would turn from those that would lead you into such snares, and you would yet be saved."

"But do you think," replied Rattling Bill, "that there's the laist chance of its coming to

all this? Why, don't you see that we have the best of it? Was the counthry ever in such a state of throuble as we've put it into at present? Fresh disturbances every day, and at every side? And hasn't our laider sent us a steel to whet our pikes? As for our mimbers that's in London, sure they're carrying every thing before 'em by the force of their speeches. Didn't our laider call the Parliament Commons the other day six hundred scoundrels? Sure that's spaking plain enough; I dare say it's the first time they ever heard such names, but they'll hear worse before he has done with 'em, if they let him go on."

"Yes, and how cleverly he got out of it afther," replied Larry M'Swiggan; "Oh! let him alone for that. He's the boy that can get out of a scrape. He said he did, and he didn't call 'em such names; and all the House was crying out *oh! oh!* as well they might, to see

his 'cuteness. And he said sure, if he did say it, it was in the *hate* of the moment ; but sure it isn't the *hate* of a moment, but the *hate* of a life, that he has against the English, as well we know, for, faith, he can't bear to allow any one to attempt to govern Ireland but himself, and small blame to him, it's quite natural afther having had his own way so long. Now, them English are quare people, and don't often call bad names ; but when oncet they say a thing, they never will deny their words, and that's where our laider has the advantage over 'em, and this bothers 'em. Now there's that Misther Manly, that gentleman that they call an *Irish* secretary, which is a bull, as he is an English secretary ; now, when he spakes, he never baits about the bush, but comes to the truth at oncet, and yet the people in the Parliament listens to him, and never coughs or laughs, or cry *oh! oh!* as they do for our mimbers,

but keep crying out *hear ! hear ! hear !* Sure, they seem as if they never would be tired of hearing him, and yet he never gives 'em the hard words, or clips the king's English, as our mimbers do,—long life to 'em, say I, but a little more *raison*."

" Well, sure," said Rattling Bill, " it will be a hard case, and a cruel case too, if we can't go about at nights killing, maiming, houghing, burning, and flogging, as we've been doing lately, but be forced to stay at home and go to bed. Who could stand this? and to be obliged to mind our work, and not attend 'sociations, nor follow the advice of our laider and his followers—better be hung at once. Then they want to thry us by soldiers instead of by jurors, which we never will stand, for we can frighten jurors at any time, but the devil himself wouldn't frighten them soldiers, who, not being used to our ways, would think our

killing a few spalpeens a great crime, and make nothing of swinging or transporting us for it. But our own jurors, who are used to it, arn't so severe ; besides they're afraid to be too hard on us, knowing that we'd soon pay 'em a visit, and pay 'em nately, for their justice. No, no, we must keep away the trials by soldiers, for there's no joke, as we'll find to our cost, if they come amongst us."

" We may defy trials and soldiers too, if we behave dacently and quietly," replied Larry M'Swiggan, " and show the English we have raison, which we've never shown 'em yet ; for to tell the truth, when they call us the wild Irish, it's the mad and the wicked Irish they might call us, without telling any fibs."

" But aren't we in honour bound to stand by O'Blarney ?" asked Rattling Bill. " And wouldn't it be a shabby and a mane thing too, to turn our backs on him, now that all the

English are laughing and coughing him down, and that he doesn't seem to have a leg to stand on? Sure, in honour and decency we're bound to stand by him to the last, and maybe he'll come to his senses, and write to us to lave our disturbances; but 'till he does we had better go on in the ould way."

It was evident even from the subdued tone of Rattling Bill, that the schoolmaster's speech had produced some effect on his hearers, and that even in their rude breasts and turbulent spirits, a sentiment of generosity was the strongest bond that still attached them to their leaders. When will the natural good qualities of this misled people be allowed to display themselves, and to win admiration where they have hitherto been accustomed to excite only dread or dislike? Let us hope that this period is not far distant.

CHAPTER VII.

“ So love does raine
In stoutest minds, and maketh monstrous warre :
He maketh warre, he maketh peace againe,
And yett his peace is but continuall jarre :
O miserable men that to him subject arre !”

THE spirits of Lord and Lady Oriel felt lightened when they had left London, and each mile that they retreated from it seemed to render them more cheerful. The fair and delicate hand which Lord Oriel pressed within his, returned the pressure ; and the renewed tenderness of their sentiments made them feel as if they had escaped from some direful calamity,

some deluge that had threatened to annihilate, or, worse,—to separate them for ever.

All this was felt, but not expressed. At such moments, language appears too cold, too feeble to convey our thoughts, and a look—a pressure of the hand, speaks more eloquently to the feelings, than all that words could express.

The blow which Lady Oriel's health had received in the late shock, rendered her too delicate to travel rapidly; but, so tranquilly, if not happily, passed the hours, that she wished not to abridge their brief career. Lord Oriel read to her, and, when fatigued, she leaned her head on his shoulder with more tenderness, if with less confidence, than on former journeys, because she felt that henceforth they must be all the world to each other, while hitherto the world had been much to them. They stopped the first evening at * * * *, and while

waiting for tea, Lord Oriel took up a newspaper that lay on the table, while Lady Oriel closed her eyes to protect them from the glare of light in the room, which after some hours of darkness in the carriage had dazzled them. On opening them, her glance fell on her husband, and she was shocked at witnessing the change a few minutes had produced in his appearance. The hand that held the paper trembled; his face was deadly pale; and wildly and furtively he glanced at her, and perceiving he had excited her attention, hastily left the room, carrying with him the paper.

When he returned, the traces of suppressed agitation were visible in his countenance, and it instantly occurred to Lady Oriel that the paper he had been perusing must have contained some statement relative to her, which had caused this change; but on which she dared not, either for his sake or her own, trust her

self to speak to him. Her embarrassment was increased by observing that when tea was brought in, the three officious waiters who attended, seemed to examine her and Lord Oriel with peculiar attention. This might only be imagination, but she thought that Lord Oriel seemed to have made the same remark, and that he shrank beneath the infliction. All his efforts to keep up a cheerful conversation for the rest of the evening were unavailing; both felt their restraint, but neither dared to comment upon it.

At each resting-place on the route, Lady Oriel observed that her husband studiously removed the newspapers from her sight. This studied precaution increased the nervous agitation which each day gained ground, and added to the languor and feverish excitement that was exhausting her strength. His affectionate attention seemed redoubled, and he watched

over her with a tenderness known only to those who have witnessed or been the object of those nameless attentions that an all-engrossing and anxiously-excited affection bestows in illness or in affliction.

Arrived at the Lakes, they took up their abode at the inn at Keswick, and were more surprised than pleased, at finding that Lord and Lady Borrodaile, with their daughter, occupied the suite of rooms next theirs. Old connexions had thrown the families of Oriel and Borrodaile much into each other's society; but a total want of sympathy, and as total a difference of taste, had precluded the intimacy and cordiality that generally arise between people who often meet; and left in its place a cold and formal politeness, beyond which neither parties wished to pass.

This untoward rencontre was evidently as disagreeable to Lord Oriel as to his wife,

though he took some pains to appear indifferent to it, and proposed with affected carelessness not to make any effort to renew an intercourse which had never afforded them any pleasure. Lady Oriel felt all that was passing in his mind, and determined on avoiding, as much as lay in her power, the possibility of meeting the Borrodailes. The constraint likely to be imposed by this resolution, was contemplated with a depression of spirits both by husband and wife; and they retired to their pillows *gênè* by the dread of the morrow.

What are called *presentiments* are but a knowledge of the future, acquired by experience; and they are seldom fallacious. Those that depressed Lord and Lady Oriel at night, were increased in the morning by discovering that, unless they made themselves prisoners in their chamber, there was little chance of avoiding their neighbours, as the rooms were so

near, and they were so continually passing from the salon to the bed-rooms, that not to meet would be almost impossible.

Lady Oriel was going to her sitting-room, when Lady Borrodaile with one of her daughters came suddenly upon her. The girl appeared embarrassed and awkward, blushed and turned away; but the mother drew herself up, with an air of affected dignity, and having thrown as much angry expression into her small grey eyes as they would contain, which expression was turned on the beautiful face of Lady Oriel, she seized her daughter's hand and hurried quickly away, as if fearful of contamination by contact with her.

All this was the business of a moment; but its effects on Lady Oriel were overpowering. She retreated to her bed-room, to endeavour to calm her agitation before she joined Lord Oriel at breakfast, and she had been twice summoned

to that repast, ere she had courage to encounter him.

Whilst writhing under the insult she had just received, her only source of consolation was, that her husband had not witnessed it. Her own humiliation, hard as it was to be borne, she could bear ; but *his*, brought on him too by her, was more than she had fortitude to resist. The Indian proverb says, that contempt can pierce even the shell of the tortoise. How then must it have wounded the sensitive mind of a proud woman ! She had now to learn the painful lesson, that we may be stung by the marked disrespect of those whose warmest approbation could give us no satisfaction, and that the bitterness of the mortification inflicted, is not diminished by our consciousness of the unworthiness of the source whence it springs.

It was a great relief to Lady Oriel, to see in

about an hour afterwards, preparations going on at every side for the departure of the Borrodaile family. Her conclusions that this event was expedited by her arrival, were borne out by the officious intelligence of the landlord of the inn, who, when presenting the *menu* for dinner, observed that the departure of Lord Borrodaile's family was very unexpected, as their rooms had been engaged for another week. When this communication was made, Lady Oriel stole a glance at her husband, and his heightened colour and averted looks betrayed to her that he also had guessed the motive of the Borrodailes' sudden departure, though he avoided all recurrence to it.

Each new arrival at the inn filled Lady Oriel with alarm. It was in vain that she endeavoured to reason herself into tranquillity, by dwelling on the happiness that was still hers, in possessing a husband dearer to her than ever, and

who, however a cruel and envious world might slander or misjudge her, was convinced of her purity. But, alas! she felt that the warmth and delicacy of her attachment to him, gave fresh poignancy to the bitterness of knowing that *he* was wounded through her; and often did she mentally acknowledge, that all other sufferings would be light in comparison to beholding him shrinking beneath the stain her indiscretion had fixed on his honour. She even thought that a total separation from him, would be less wretched than the state of constraint in which they lived, and the witnessing the humiliations she had drawn on him.

The *séjour* at the Lakes had failed to give them the pleasure they had anticipated, and they now began to suspect that solitude alone could save them from the perpetual rencontres with persons they wished to avoid. Without daring to expose their thoughts to each other,

thoughts in which so strong a sympathy existed, they mutually wished to direct their steps to Oriel Park; but neither had courage to make the proposition, till remarking one day some plants that reminded them of similar ones transplanted the year before at their home, it led to an expression of "How well the gardens must now be looking," and a determination to go there was the consequence.

The journey was long and tedious, both the travellers being occupied with painful reflections, in which retrospections of the happy past were contrasted with fears for the clouded future. Their anxiety to conceal such thoughts, with the increased tenderness a mutual pity excited, only added to the painfulness and constraint of their situation. The sensitiveness and pride of Lord Oriel, taking alarm at every incident, kept alive in his wife's mind the continual recollection of her misfortune, and de-

stroyed the self-confidence which a consciousness of innocence might otherwise have given her.

It was on a Saturday evening that Lord and Lady Oriel reached their home. During the last ten miles of their journey they had passed through their own estate, and were greeted by smiles of welcome, even more flattering than the marks of deep respect that accompanied them, from the happy and prosperous peasantry they encountered at every step returning from their accustomed labours.

The cottages peeping forth from the trees and flowers that shaded them, the paled-in gardens, redolent with the flaunting pride of autumn, the cheerful fires seen blazing through the bright windows half filled with plants, and the rosy-cheeked children at the gates, watching the return of their fathers to share the evening repast, all presented a picture of rural

happiness, that for a short time banished the sense of their own depressed spirits, and the cause, from the breast of the owners of this exhilarating scene.

The unsophisticated joy their presence seemed to afford, was healing to the wounded pride beneath which the travellers had lately rankled. They were conscious of their power of dispensing happiness to hundreds—a consciousness that in itself precludes that deep sense of self-humiliation under which they had drooped for the last few weeks ; and as Lady Oriel reclined her head on the shoulder of her husband, and with eyes beaming with love, sought his glance, she met a look of satisfied affection, to which his intelligent countenance had long been a stranger ; and for which she requited him with a fervent and grateful pressure of the hand enclosed within her own.

The air of busy gladness with which their

servants welcomed them, was damped by an appearance of curious examination, convincing the conscious master and mistress, that the slanderous reports in circulation in the artificial sphere they had quitted, had reached their home. The demonstrative attentions of affection which passed between them,—perhaps somewhat more evident now that a consciousness of their position suggested to them the probable examination to which their manners might be subjected,—were regarded with triumphant smiles by the old servants, as proofs of the total falsehood of the reports that had reached them: and, during the late dinner that was served on their arrival, each gentle interchange of tender courtesy and kindness was noted by the significant looks and happy countenances of these faithful domestics.

Lord and Lady Oriel, in remarking this display of respectful sympathy, felt that the rank

breath of scandal had scathed even their household gods, and that the lustre of untarnished honour and purity, which identified them with all around, was blighted. The princely splendour of the apartments, the treasures of art scattered at every side, reminding them of their high station, and, alas ! too, of all the publicity that high station commanded, of which neither had ever before so forcibly felt the responsibility, seemed at present to weigh them down with a sense of oppressive and insupportable melancholy. As they retired to their chamber through the grand picture-gallery, they almost shrank beneath the stately and dignified glances with which a long train of ancestral nobles appeared to regard them from the massive and coronet-crowned frames ranged along its vast length.

Humbly did Lady Oriel, in the privacy of her oratoire, pray to the fountain of all mercy,

that some portion of the peace which had hitherto blessed her in this happy spot, might now be vouchsafed her; and bitter were the tears she shed, when she recollected the different feelings with which she had last knelt on the same hassock, then as much a stranger to the suspicion of guilt, as she was still to its reality. But the bitterness was soothed by the reflection that it was only the *suspicion* she had to weep over; and she thanked the Almighty, who had preserved her from a worse fate.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ O reputation ! dearer far than life !
Thou precious balsam, lovely, sweet of smell,
Whose cordial drop once spilt by some rash hand,
Not all the owner's care, nor the repenting toil
Of the rude spiller, ever can collect
To its first purity and native sweetness !”

LORD and Lady Oriel made it a rule to be regular attendants at divine service. They went to church the day after their arrival, and felt the soothing influence each well-known object had over them. They arrived before the service had commenced, and as their eyes fell on the family monuments, monuments so often looked upon, and never without chastened

feelings, the nothingness of all that had lately agitated them seemed more forcibly brought before them. In the pew they now occupied, once sat the persons whose names, recorded on the marble before them, and whose memories, perhaps treasured by a few, were all that now remained — shadows that had appeared and passed away, to be followed by others, alike destined to the same fleeting existence, and doomed to sleep in the vault beneath. The same feelings and passions had actuated them ; their hearts had beat with the same feverish pulses in youth ; and disappointment and care, the lot of all, had reconciled them to the inevitable *dénouement* of the tragedy of death.

Nothing so strongly enables us to meet with dignity and resignation, the misfortunes of life, as reflections on its brevity ; and such reflections are never brought so vividly to the mind as in a place of divine worship,

where our progenitors have offered up their prayers. We occupy their places among the living; our eyes dwell on, and our hearts repeat, the same supplications to the Deity so often offered up by them; our ears drink the solemn sounds of the same pealing organ that thrilled theirs; all the objects around have been familiar to their eyes, as they now are to our own; and they are sleeping the marble slumber of death in the cold dark vault, that sends forth its hollow reverberations to the sacred music they can hear no more. And we, too, who fret our little hour upon this mortal stage, shall soon rest with them! Others will take our places as we have taken theirs, to pass through the same existence, and to arrive at the same goal.

It is at such moments that we truly feel the nothingness—the worthlessness—of all that most preys upon us in life, and that the mind

reposes, if not with hope, at least without dread, on that doom the inevitableness of which offers the only balm for ills that would be otherwise unbearable.

The soothing contemplations of Lord and Lady Oriel were interrupted by the commencement of the service; and, though occupied as both were by its duties, they could not avoid observing that all eyes were directed to their pew with an expression in which curiosity was much more apparent than that *bienveillance* and respectful attention which had hitherto been wont to greet their first appearance at church. The sermon, too, which at any other period would have only claimed attention for its merit, now seemed to their conscious imaginations as being appropriately chosen with a reference to their supposed position. Its subject was charity; not the charity of giving alms, of clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, but the greater,

the more difficult, and more elevated charity of judging favourably the imputed or proved errors of others—a charity so seldom practised.

The earnest and fervid manner of Dean Vernon, their good pastor, lent additional force to the eloquence and purity of his words; and, (but it might be only fancy,) they thought that a kinder expression seemed to pervade the countenances of the congregation, whose glances were continually directed to their pew. The service being over, the acquaintances of Lord and Lady Oriel, who had been hitherto proud to flock round them and dispute their gracious smiles and shakes of the hand, now seemed to stand back, as if waiting to be guided by their pastor. The good dean having sought his wife and daughter, advanced with them to Lord and Lady Oriel; and the inquisitive examiners of the meeting observed, that if there was an increased gravity in his manner,

there was also an affectionate cordiality in the greeting, which showed that, if he had been grieved by the injurious reports so shamefully blazoned in the newspapers, he had never believed them.

This public display of respect from the dignified and conscientious clergyman and his family, was the signal for the respectful salutations of the rest of their acquaintances; and they returned home with something of their accustomed feelings, though with a latent consciousness that to Dean Vernon's treatment they owed their good reception.

The next day's post brought Lady Oriel a letter from her brother from Ireland, announcing his intended marriage. It was filled with lover-like praises of his future wife. After enumerating her perfections, mental and personal, he added, " But I will sum up all by saying, that Frances Desmond is worthy to be

the friend of my sister, and I anticipate with feelings of delight her residence in England, and her entrance into the world of fashion under your protection. I know not another woman of your age, my dearest Louisa, to whose guidance I would entrust Frances; and perhaps there are few who would like to take charge of so handsome a person as she is. But you are free from jealousy, as your reputation is established as a beauty, and, what is infinitely better, as an unsuspected wife,—so you alone shall be her *chaperon*.”

The letter fell from her trembling hands, and a violent flood of tears gave relief to her oppressed heart. The affectionate praises of her brother arriving at such a moment, pierced her to the soul, and she felt that *he* too, who had hitherto been a source of happiness to her, would henceforth be an additional cause of pain, as he, like her husband, would be forced to blush for her.

“ Oh ! how dreadful is my position,” exclaimed Lady Oriel. “ I bring only shame and dishonour on those who love me ; those for whom I would die to save them from a pang. How often have I looked forward to my dear brother’s marrying, and giving me a sister to love ; but now—how bitter is the thought ! my imprudence has rendered me unworthy to be the friend of his wife ; for how could I bear to have her exposed to any of the cruel animadversions which her association with me might, nay, must occasion ?”

It was some time ere Lady Oriel could again take up her brother’s letter to finish its perusal, but when she did, she was relieved by finding that he stated it was not his intention to come to England for some months, and she was grateful at being spared, even for so short a period, from the embarrassment which the arrival of his sister-in-law, under her pre-

sent humiliating circumstances, must draw on her.

And now Lady Oriel felt, and felt with renewed bitterness, that even the appearance of guilt produces situations incompatible with the domestic affections. What could be a more convincing proof of this, than that she, who a short time ago would have anticipated with impatience, and hailed with delight, the arrival of her dear and only brother, now shrank from seeing him, and felt relieved that he was not coming for some months? She answered her brother's letter; and it was that answer, in which a tone of melancholy was so evident, that alarmed him. The manner in which Lady Abberville tore the veil of ignorance as to his sister's situation from the eyes of Colonel Forrester, is already known to our readers.

We must now return to London, where we left the Desmond family and their son-in-law,

waiting the answer to the letter which the Colonel had written to his sister on the subject of his proposed visit. This answer we will now lay before our readers.

“ Never, my dearest brother, did I address you with such various feelings as at this moment, when joy at your arrival, after so long a separation, ought to be the only one I should entertain. How shall I tell you that I have had the misfortune of incurring scandal that has blighted my fame, and though innocent in deed, has sent me covered with shame into retirement? That I am guiltless, you will readily believe; but how few will render me this justice! Still, ought I, can I, let your young and spotless wife’s reputation be exposed to the sarcasms that the ill-natured world may be inclined to throw on it, if she becomes my associate? I shrink from this responsibility,

for, alas ! have I not already brought dishonour on *him* I would have died to preserve from it ? And you too, my brother, will you not have cause to blush for me, when you see the name of your sister, of whom you once were proud, made the subject of defamation ?

“ All that I have borne you may imagine, but I never can describe. My husband, my inestimable husband, like yourself, has never doubted me ; but his affection and unswerving confidence, which ought to be my consolation, as they are my pride, only make me feel with more bitterness the dreadful position in which my inexperience and folly have placed us both. Lord Oriel knows that the tongue of slander is busy with my fame, and that even his continued confidence has not shielded me from its envenomed wounds. My own humiliation I could bear, but to draw shame on *him*, does, indeed, fill my soul with bitterness.

“ But I have not yet told you what has led to this fearful degradation. Alas ! it was my levity in permitting attentions ; the motives of which, though obvious to others, never were suspected by me until the comments they excited had rendered me the subject of general conversation, and were reported to me through the mortifying medium of my own servant. I have frequently tried to write all this to you, but felt unequal to the task. Now, however, it can no longer be delayed, and mine is the bitter, the humiliating duty of telling you, that you have no longer a sister of whom you can be proud, or one that can be an honorable companion to your wife.

“ I can never do justice to the delicacy of the conduct of my dear husband all through this fearful business ; but I tremble when I think of the mortification I have entailed on his proud spirit : and fear that even you will

think I ought not to have subjected him to a continuance of humiliation by accepting the protection his love affords me, now that *he* alone, besides yourself, believes me worthy of it.

“ I have had great struggles on this point. You, who know how I love my husband, can imagine the despair which a separation from him would cause me ; but the misery of seeing him exposed to mortification and suffering brought on him by me, is almost as bad.

“ Your happiness is my only source of consolation. If you wish to preserve that, let not your young and inexperienced wife, in the consciousness of innocence, be exposed to attentions, which, though they fail to sully the purity of her mind, may leave a stain on her reputation that all her tears can never efface. Be her guide and adviser ; warn her of the approach of danger ; be careful that her conduct exempt her from the possibility of miscon-

struction, and that her purity be as little doubted by the world as by yourself. So will you both be spared the misery now felt by your affectionate sister,

“ LOUISA ORIEL.”

CHAPTER IX.

“ ’Tis slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world : kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave,
This viperous slander enters.”

COLONEL FORRESTER saw at a glance the whole position of his sister ; and knowing the character of her husband, he felt all that she must suffer from his pride and susceptibility. He, too, had indulged in an almost blameable pride of his sister. He had seen her the idol most worshipped in the temple of fashion ; and, conscious of her purity and fixed principles, he

had never for a moment suspected the possibility of her losing that high consideration in the world which he saw her enjoying. But, alas ! in proportion to her elevation had been her fall ; for those who once durst hardly have approached the altar of this earthly divinity, were now the most ready to trample on her. His manly heart bled when he contemplated his still pure and high-minded sister exposed to the sneers and calumny of those incapable of believing her innocence, because incapable of passing the fiery ordeal of temptation undefiled, as she had done.

But while he grieved over her imprudence, and its fatal consequences, how did he rejoice in her innocence ! With the conviction of this, he could stand forth her champion undismayed, and he could place by her side the wife of his bosom, his own pure and high-souled Frances, without aught, save pleasur-

able feelings. Never did his heart yearn towards his sister more tenderly than at this period, and the letter he wrote her was filled with every expression of undiminished confidence, affection, and sympathy.

A worldly-minded brother would have remained away from the scene of his sister's degradation at such a moment, and would either have contented himself with appearing ignorant of the circumstance ; or have taken the opportunity of sending her a lecture on her imprudence, mixed up with some comments on the chances of its results extending to him. All the possible annoyances would have been dwelt on, until he had made her feel that in a brother she had found a censurer instead of a friend.

But Colonel Forrester was no worldly-minded brother, and therefore he tried to comfort and assuage the already too bitter feelings of his

sister. He made Mr. and Mrs. Desmond acquainted with the letter of Lady Oriel; for, as they had heard the statement of Lady Abberville, he thought this exposition necessary. They were too good, too honorable, and too pure themselves, not to enter with warmth into the feelings of the writer; and they named an early day for leaving town for Oriel Park, determined to contribute all in their power to re-establish its mistress in the high station which she was so calculated to adorn.

It has been before stated, that Mrs. Desmond was English. Her connexions were amongst the highest and most influential of the aristocracy, and she had always kept up a constant and cordial intercourse with them. The Desmonds belonged to no clique, sought not for supremacy, because their due portion of respect was accorded to them; and they were as ignorant of the petty intrigues, jealousies,

“envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,” that characterise the circle, designated by the *prétentieuse* and insulting cognomen of “The Exclusives,” as though they had never lived in London during the season.

The circle in which Mr. Desmond moved, has ever been distinguished for the purity of its morals, the dignity of its manners, and the unaffected decorum of its members. This circle is a kind of oasis in the desert of the vast metropolis, refreshing to all who approach it, and where politics, that powerful leveller, has no influence, as Whigs and Tories are equally well received in it. It would be invidious to name the females who adorn this high and pure aristocracy; but we might make a long list, and glory in holding up to imitation women of whom England may well be proud, though they are neither patronesses of Almack’s, nor obstinate sticklers for any system of exclu-

siveness, excepting that which regards moral character.

Mrs. Desmond suggested to her son-in-law the propriety of introducing Lady Oriel into this circle. "They all know me well," added the good woman, "and will take your sister on the faith of my character. Nay, it is more than probable that they are in perfect ignorance of all the vile reports, for they neither talk scandal nor read scandalous publications. But if they heard them, they would conclude them false the moment they saw Lady Oriel living on the best terms with her honorable and high-minded husband, and that she was the associate chosen by me for my daughter. The consciousness of your sister's establishment in this really respectable circle, will soothe the wounded sensibility of your brother-in-law, and restore him to all his former feelings. So we must persuade them to return with us to Lon-

don for the season, however little disposed they may be to do so."

Colonel Forrester felt the good sense and kindness of Mrs. Desmond, and rejoiced in thinking of the invaluable female friends,—the *rarest* of all acquisitions,—he had secured for his sister in Mrs. Desmond and her daughter.

The party set out for Oriel Park, and were not sorry to see in all the fashionable newspapers an announcement of their departure from Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley Square, to join the distinguished individuals, who were on a visit to the Earl and Countess of Oriel. They knew London and its fashionable inhabitants sufficiently well, to be aware that one half of them would conclude the other half were amongst the guests of Oriel Park, and forget all scandalous histories, in their desire to be there also. Such are London fashionables!

When we censure London fashionables for

the heartlessness and selfishness which have rendered them proverbial, the censure is applied to them not as individuals, but as a body. It is the system that produces the evil, and it is only while acting *en masse* that they are faulty. The same persons who in the country, removed from the influence of the many-headed monster, ycleped fashion, are rational and well-disposed, in London lose their own identity, and adopt all the conventional egoism of their different cliques. They have raised a monstrous idol, whose worship demands a continual sacrifice of all the best and purest feelings, and they are frightened at this imaginary hydra of their own creation. The opinions of their circle are made the alpha and omega of their line of conduct ; and it is not the wrong or the right of such or such a step, but the “ What will the world say of it ? ” which governs them. Moral rectitude and kind feelings

are all made subservient to the tyrannical sway of fashion, and the most ill-natured actions are committed without a particle of malice, merely because each individual of a clique must act as the others do.

Only one thing can be said in favour of this system of congregating, and loss of identity, namely, the humility it implies; for a person with any consciousness of mental superiority, could never offer up his tastes and feelings at the shrine of an earth-formed deity, who delights only in mediocrity. M'Adam has not more effectually reduced the surface of our streets to the same level, than has fashion macadamised the minds of her votaries. No inequalities remain—no elevations to mark a difference. All are flattened down; and one may bowl along through fashionable life without encountering any more jolts from genius, talent, or affectionate feelings, than one should

receive on the high ways of the modern Colossus of *Roads*, as he has been aptly named.

This community of the private stock of thoughts and feelings of each individual, to the public stock, reminds one of the partition of goods and repasts in common among the Spartans. There are *other* points of resemblance also, which we leave to the ingenuity of the reader to discover; only premising that England has arrived at too great a degree of civilization to sanction a partition of goods. It is only in thoughts, feelings, time, and repasts she tolerates a community — property is carefully preserved for private use or public display, and nowhere is more respect paid to the distinctions of *meum* and *tuum*.

We must not omit to state that which we had nearly overlooked, namely, that the habitual reference to the received usages of fashionable life, on all cases of feeling as well as of eti-

quette, has its advantages. Private sympathies and family affection, with all the embarrassments they are so likely to entail, are at once abolished by the irrevocable laws of fashion; and one is absolved from the painful necessity of extending invitations to brothers or sisters not *à-la-mode*, or living out of the set of the fashionables. “They don’t mix with our clique,” is considered by a woman of fashion as a satisfactory and unanswerable mode of accounting for any breach of family kindness: she is innocent—the world alone is guilty.

How much trouble is saved by this conventional mode, this true *savoir vivre*! Precedents are established, from which there is no appeal; and in cases of reproach from slighted friends, left-off cousins, and cut acquaintances, a reference to the standing laws of the society acquits the reproached of any breach *des conventions de sa clique*, or of being at all (as a lady

in such a case once candidly said,) influenced by private feelings. Yet some of the most admirable women, and excellent men, are to be found in the circles denominated, *par excellence*, the fashionable world. They enter them as they would a theatre, and are but as an audience; while those whom we have described *en masse*, are the actors, who have so identified themselves with their *roles*, that they have forgotten their original characters, and never figure but in those they have assumed. It is for this weakness that we have criticised them; as, however excellent the performance may be, a little more variety would be agreeable.

Marmontel described the fashionables of his own time and country, as “ *Passant la moitié de leur temps à rien faire, et l'autre moitié à faire des riens,*” a description more applicable to ours at present, as the French confine their fashionable homage to dress alone; and each

individual contributes his or her quota to society without attempting to dictate to it, or establish codes, except as far as regards the toilette.

In Italy, the “*dolce far niente*” operates so powerfully on the habits of its luxurious natives, that few could be found who would submit to the trouble of framing laws, or following them, for the regulation of that which they consider merely as an *accessoire* to general society ; and there are perhaps from this cause, less heart-burnings and bitter feelings in Italy than elsewhere.

CHAPTER X.

“ O ! sacred Sorrow ! by whom souls are tried,
Sent not to punish mortals, but to guide ;
If thou art mine, and who shall proudly dare
To tell his Maker he has had his share ?
Still let me feel for what thy pangs are sent,
And be my guide, and not my punishment.”

IN addition to her own troubles, Grace Cassidy had many friends and relations who had fallen victims to the system, into which they were led by the designing and self-interested, and she had to weep over the consequences of errors she could not defend ; errors still more to be deplored, because their commission marks not alone the want of sense but the want of

principle, two deficiencies which are too frequently inseparable.

A first cousin of Grace had been imprisoned on a charge of having been implicated in the murder of the police-man killed by Jack Donovan. His wife was in her confinement, and his first-born child was supposed to be at the point of death, when Grace sought their cabin to perform the duties of humanity.

A few months before, the cottage of Patrick Mahoney was remarkable for its air of cleanliness and comfort. He was an industrious and sober man, an affectionate husband to a mild, gentle creature, and the fond father of one of the finest boys in the village. Every thing round them flourished, and they were quoted as an example of the good effects of prudence and steady conduct. But in a luckless hour Patrick had listened to the counsel of one, whom not to listen to would have been deem-

ed sin ; and ruin and misery followed his obedience.

Wretched are those, and miserable must they remain, whose religious, moral, and social duties, are in direct variance. An observance of the advice of his spiritual director is supposed to be as necessary for the future salvation of a Roman Catholic, as obedience to the laws, and respect to the implied wishes of his landlord, are considered necessary to his worldly welfare. When these several obligations happen to be in violent opposition, how difficult is it for a poor, and well-disposed, but ignorant man, to choose between ruin here and perdition hereafter ! And is it to be wondered at, that many risk and merit the first, to avoid the second ? Such was the case with Patrick Mahoney ; for unfortunately he, like all his countrymen of the class to which he belonged, with a strong predisposition to good,

had no fixed principles to guide him ; and consequently fell a ready victim to the pernicious advice of those who should have saved him.

In a country where the true principles of religion are understood, the precepts of its minister must be in accordance with its tenets ; but in the Catholic church, in Ireland, where superstition supplies its place, and where moral duties are as undefined as they are miscomprehended, the priests wield a power as dangerous as it is in general misapplied ; and those who yield an implicit obedience to it, which in the early ages would have won for them the palm and glory of martyrdom, have now all the sufferings, but none of the glory. Some there are among the Catholic clergy who are pious, good men, fulfilling the duties of their station with exemplary perseverance, charity, and humility ; but they become every day more rare, and one dictator can encourage a thousand Jesuits to be

ready to act as his political agents whenever he intimates that he has occasion for their services ; and what such services as they can lend may accomplish, the last few years in Ireland bear painful witness.

Grace found poor Mary Mahoney laid on the bed of sickness ; her body exhausted by suffering, but her mind still more afflicted. Her pale face was contrasted by her straight raven brows, and the long black eyelashes, that threw a shadow over her cheeks. A dead infant was placed in a cradle near her bed, and her poor sick child was lying by her side, his heavy eyes and flushed cheek denoting the ravages that fever was making in his constitution. His poor mother was continually moistening his lips with some syrup, and the glance of mute, meek, subdued anguish with which she looked from the sick boy to the dead infant, and then at Grace, spoke more

powerfully than words could have done, all that was passing in her mind.

Grace attempted not to comfort the bereaved mother, for she felt that the attempt would be unavailing; but she actively bestirred herself to have the sick boy put into a small bed, and kept as cool as possible, and made the necessary preparations to have the dead infant removed for interment.

Mary Mahoney submitted to all Grace's arrangements, merely saying, "Let me kiss my poor baby before you hide it from me for ever. It never had a father's kiss; but promise me, Grace, that you will go to the prison to my husband, and try to comfort him. Poor Patrick wants it more than I do, and tell him, dear Grace, what a sweet baby it was; but no—don't tell him, for he would only regret it the more, and he has had too much trouble already. Tell him, Grace a-vourneen, that I am better,

and doing finely ; quite reconciled to the will of God, and always praying for him. Tell him that our poor boy is aisier, and to have no care about us. Oh ! Grace asthore, spake kindly to him, with your own sweet, mild, sensible voice, and 'twill do him good, and take the bitterness out of his heart, just as honey cures the wound that is made by the sting of wasps ; and ochone ! he has been stung, and to the quick too. Mind, a-vourneen, you tell him how well I am, and give him this kiss for me," pressing her pale, cold lips on the forehead of Grace.

The coffin which a kind neighbour had ordered for the dead infant before Grace had arrived, was now brought in, and a tremulous movement about the lips, and still more marble paleness, proved the renewed anguish of the mother. " Grace ma-vourneen," murmured she, " don't raison with

me, for I'm beyond *raison*, my heart, and my poor head are so tired ; but do, for mercy-sake, what I ask you. Sprinkle the coffin with holy water. Now bring it here, and lay it on the bed, and fetch me the flannels you'll find in the corner cupboard. There — that will do ; help me to sit up, that I may make my baby's last bed."

She folded the flannels smoothly, one over the other, making a little elevation like a pillow, and then pointed for Grace to bring her the dead infant. When it was brought to her she kissed its little face and hands several times, pressed it to her bosom, and then placed it gently in the coffin.

" I had hoped, my precious babe," said she, " to have placed you in a softer bed, and to have made my breast your pillow ; but the Almighty has thought fit to take you from me, and I submit without murmuring to *his* holy will.

The thoughts of you, child of my heart, shall make me still more desirous so to do my duty in this life, that I may meet you in Heaven."

She bowed her head to kiss, once more, the infant, and then said to Grace, "Now, dear friend, close the coffin, I have looked my last on that sweet face; and lift the curtain of the little bed where my boy lies, that I may see I have still a child left me. Och! Grace, it is a blessed thing to be a mother; but to see the babe, for which one has suffered so much, carried away from one for ever, is a bitter thing. Then it seems, too, as if a child lost, was a link lost of the blessed chain of love between man and wife; but no, I won't think this, for grief draws hearts together."

Grace had the little bed of the sick boy brought nearer to his poor mother, and the dead infant removed for interment; and having made everything round the sick woman as

comfortable as circumstances would admit, poor Mary became so anxious that Grace should proceed to Dungarvan to visit Patrick in his prison, that she left her to return to her own home, to demand the company of Jim on the expedition.

When she was quitting the room, poor Mary called her once more to beg she would be sure to tell Patrick how finely she was going on, and not to be uneasy about her.

What an inexhaustible mine of tenderness is there in woman's heart ! Here was this helpless creature, with a frame worn down by illness, and a mind bowed by anxiety for a husband and child, and grief for the death of her infant, forgetting her own misery to send comfort to her husband ; to that husband who had occasioned all her troubles by his obstinacy in rejecting her advice and entreaties, and who had plunged her in such alarm as to cause a

premature labour, and the death of her child. The thought that he would feel all this with bitterness and self-accusation, rendered her the more anxious to make him believe that she was doing well, for affection triumphed over all suffering and selfishness. Affection is the true, the only refiner of our natures ; and the humblest peasant in her cottage who feels it, is at heart more refined than the proudest princess who is unconscious of its influence, but who would be shocked by an unpolished phrase or an inelegant expression. There is a wide distance between refinement of the heart and refinement of the manners ; and we see many instances of the latter, with a total deficiency of the former

CHAPTER XI.

“The virtues of others often serve as a light to illumine our own mental darkness, and to incite us to goodness.”

GRACE CASSIDY returned with a heavy heart to her cottage. The resignation and meekness of Mary Mahoney had filled her with admiration and pity, and she accused herself of not having, with the patience of her friend, borne the trials that Jim's obstinacy had entailed on her. “Oh,” said she, “what were my trials to hers? and how thankful ought I to be to God! Short-sighted and ungrateful that I have been, how

have I lamented not being a mother ! and now that I know the misery children may cause, have I not reason to rejoice that this grief has not fallen on me, as I might, like Mary Mahoney, have seen my babe shut from my sight for ever ? Oh ! 'twas a bitter sight, to behold her pale face laid against the dead face of her infant, as she gave it the last kiss ; and her words, and, above all, the meek look of the poor creature, made me feel a choking that I have seldom undergone before. It reminded me so much of the old song of a mother to her dead child, which I used to think too sorrowful to be true, that poor Mary seemed the very person who made it, and it has been ringing in my ears ever since.

“ Oh ! sleep, my babe, on that cold bed
On which I lay thy precious form ;
I thought to pillow thy fair head
Upon a mother's bosom warm.

“ But death, cold death, has snatch’d my child,
And sorrow fills my aching breast ;
Nor can it soothe my anguish wild
To know my darling is at rest.

“ Yes, precious babe, thou ’rt gone to sleep,
Unknowing all the cares I feel ;
Thine eyes had yet not learn’d to weep,
When death thus closed them with his seal.

“ Oh ! take a mourning mother’s kiss,
Impress’d upon thy forehead fair :
Ah ! why these tears ? for thou ’rt in bliss,
While we in sorrow linger here.”

“ Sure, there is something in real sorrow that touches us all ; but when it is borne as poor Mary bears it, one feels that God gives us such examples to teach us how we ought to bear the troubles *He* sends us. I hope the lesson won’t be lost on me, for sure it was one that would touch a heart of stone. And there is poor Mary in that darkened room, the empty cradle before her that held her dead child, and

her sick boy, with his poor burning brow, and *he* that ought to be near to comfort her, locked up in a prison—and all this misery is within a few steps of me; and here is the brilliant sun going to his bed, and drawing his bright crimson curtains around him, just as if he had not looked down on grief and sorrow this day. How many hearts have ached and eyes wept, since that sun arose this morning! and there he is, going to sleep with as much splendour as if all below here was happy. Sure, it isn't natural; I'd like to see him look a little gloomy, with dark clouds about him, instead of all those gold and crimson ones, so that one might think he felt a little of the troubles of us poor creatures; and I don't like to hear all the birds singing so gaily, and to see every thing looking so beautiful, when poor Mary has such a heavy heart, and her innocent babe is just laid in the grave. But,

sure, I'm a fool to have such thoughts, just as if the sun, who passes over such hundreds, ay, and thousands of people too, can mind *us*; or as if the birds are sensible of our troubles; but still it does seem unnatural to see every thing in nature smiling when our hearts are sinking."

When Grace entered the cottage, she found Jim impatiently expecting her. "I thought you'd never come home, Grace," said he; "and the house looked so quare and so dismal without you, that I was quite lonesome."

"I'm glad you missed me, Jim dear," said Grace, "and I never felt more contented to see you. Sure, I've been thinking how thankful I ought to be to God, to have you safe by my side, and myself too in good health, God be praised! when I don't deserve such blessings half so much as poor Mary Mahoney. Och! Jim, it is she that bears her troubles. May

He who gave them, lighten them, and send poor Patrick safe out of prison, to be a comfort to her! And now, dear Jim, that my heart is full with all I've seen and felt the last few hours, let us both kneel down, and return thanks for all the mercies we have enjoyed, and the sorrows that have been spared us."

The earnestness of Grace's manner, and the description she had given him of Mary Mahoney's sufferings and resignation, touched the naturally good heart of Jim. They knelt and offered up their prayers, with hearts penetrated with thankfulness, and retired to sleep with more tranquil feelings than either had known for some time, and determined to set out to visit poor Patrick in prison next morning.

When Grace and Jim had finished their morning's repast, they made up a store of such

provisions as they thought would be acceptable to the poor prisoner, and then pursued their way to Dungarvan. It was a lovely morning, and all nature seemed rejoicing. Birds carolled on every branch, and butterflies sported in the air, "like winged flowers." The dew still sparkled on the leaves, and the atmosphere was redolent with the perfume of the wild-flowers, growing in abundance on every side.

They were leaving this bright and beautiful scene to enter the gloomy walls of a prison, to comfort him, who was debarred from this pleasant sight, and who was kept away from his suffering wife and child. They both felt this, and while it rendered them serious, it increased their tenderness to each other. Jim was more like the Jim of former days, than he had been for many months, and Grace had more hopes of his amendment.

“ I feel, Jim dear,” said Grace, while they pursued their route, “ that my heart has been lighter since we knelt down and prayed together last night, than it has been for months. Oh ! if you knew the bitterness of feeling that while the lips are addressing God, the heart is beating for *one* that seems to forget Him ! Many ’s the time I ’ve got up from my knees, fearful of offending with lip-prayers, when my whole soul has been with you ; and, oh ! the frightful thoughts that have come into my mind. I used to imagine, Jim, that if by prayers and good works I could merit Heaven, what a terrible thing it would be for me to be there without you ; and the idea of our being separated in the next world, was so fearful to me, that I have been afraid to pray. But then I considered in myself, and I came to the resolution to do all the good I could, and always to pray for you ; and since then my

mind has been easier, and I find I can give my whole thoughts to the prayers when they are offered for you ; whereas, when I prayed for myself, my thoughts were going after you. Jim, how completely a poor woman's happiness here and hereafter depends on her husband ! God forgive me, for I know it's a terrible sin and weakness, but I'd lose the courage to pray if I thought you and I would not be united in the next world. So you see a man has a double sin to answer for when he neglects his religion, for he risks his own soul, and his poor wife's too."

" Well, Grace, I give you my hand and word that, with the blessing of God, I'll never miss joining with you in prayers for the future, for what you've just told me shows your own fond loving heart so plain, that I'd be a brute if I could let you have such thoughts

when I may prevent 'em by doing my duty. Sure, Grace, there 's something in a good woman that 's holy and purifying, and if all women were like you and Mary Mahoney, the world would be better. The only wonder is, how poor Patrick and I could ever be such weak fools as to vex ye day after day. God forgive us for our neglect, and keep us from doing the like again ! It 's a quare thing, Grace, but so it is, that whenever you spake to me from your head, that is when you spake plain *raison* to me, I don't mind it a bit ; but when you spake to me from your heart, I 'm ready to do anything you ask me, for *my* heart understands yours just as if they were twins—but the heads don't agree at all ; so when you want to get good of me, don't spake from the head, for I 'm no great hand at *raison*-ing, and am very contrairy likewise, but the

heart is right after all, and besides, Grace, that's your own, so you may do as you like with it."

Jim and Grace arrived at Dungarvan, and sought the prison, where, after some hesitation, they were admitted, and allowed to see the poor prisoner.

CHAPTER XII.

False friends will seek you in a happy home ;
But true friends only to a prison come.

Old Play.

AFTER passing through various corridors, attended by the turnkey, whose services they retained by a present, they arrived at the door of the cell in which Patrick Mahoney was confined.

“ Well,” exclaimed Grace, “ what an immense place the gaol is, and what thick walls and gloomy passages ! Sure it’s a curious thing, if the country is so poor as people say, that they can afford to build such large strong

prisons; maybe half what it cost to build it would keep more than half the prisoners out of it. Sure it's a sign they must have great call for 'em; and, you see, it would make ten of the parish church."

These reflections were uttered to Jim while they passed through the corridors; but when, arrived at the door, Grace saw the turnkey fit in the ponderous key to the lock, and remove the chain that crossed the door, the sound grated harshly on her ear, and she involuntarily shuddered.

"Here are some friends come to visit you, Mahoney," said the turnkey. "The ould saying goes, that people don't like to see friends in distress, and that's the raison they never come to 'em in prison; but I'm sure the two that's come to see you are friends, and real friends too; so I'll leave you together." And, pushing them in, he closed the door, and they

heard him bolt and lock it again on the outside.

Patrick Mahoney was sitting on the side of his wretched bed, the only piece of furniture in the cell that could serve as substitute for a chair. He laid down the book he had been reading, and advanced to meet Grace and Jim. He was pale and haggard, with a care-worn aspect, as if he had been months, instead of only a few days, the inmate of a prison. He was unshaved, and his dark beard made his haggard paleness appear still more striking.

“Neighbours,” said he, embracing them both, “this is a dismal place you behold me in, and it’s only kind and constant friends like yourselves that would come here. Have you seen my poor woman, Grace Cassidy?” continued he, a tear starting to his eye as he spoke; “and my poor boy, that was ill in the fever, when they tore me away from ’em. As

for Mary, she always thries to make light of her own sufferings; and when I got frightened at seeing the terrible paleness that came over her face, and the twitching about her mouth, when they were dragging me away, sure she cried out to me that she was not ill at all, and that it was only a stitch in her chest, that was gone in a minute.—Her face, just as she looked that moment, is always before my eyes, and I have not the courage of a mouse to bear up against all the frightful thoughts that keep coming into my head about her.”

Grace broke to him the real state of his wife and child, and the death of the infant, with all the kind and consolatory expressions she could use, and delivered the messages of poor Mary; but nothing could soften the bitterness of Patrick Mahoney’s grief, as he felt that *he* had brought all those troubles on his wife. Tears chased each other down his cheeks, and

he accused himself with vehemence of having caused the death of his infant, and probably that of his wife and son.

“ Oh! Grace Cassidy,” said he, in answer to Grace’s attempts at consoling him, “ it’s no use talking; sure I know and feel I’m the cause of it all. Has not that blessed creature, for blessed she is, been advising me for months and months not to go against my landlord, and not to be attending the meetings or following the Repalers? and she warned me of all that would happen; but I, like a brute and a fool, wouldn’t listen to her, though I beheld her getting paler and thinner every day; and you see how her words are come throe! There she is, in her solitary cabin, on the bed of sickness and sorrow, to which my folly has brought her; and I locked up here, without being able to go and nurse her, and half-maddened by the dismal thoughts that comes into my head continually.”

Fresh bursts of tears and sobs followed each exclamation of Patrick, which were shared by his two friends, who left no means untried to comfort the afflicted and heart-broken man. Grace assured him that she would go and see Mary every day, and that she should want for nothing; that they would take back cooling draughts for the child, and whatever the doctor thought would be best for Mary; but that, unless they could tell her that they left Patrick resigned to the will of God, no medicine would do her good: and this argument had more influence on Patrick than all the others.

He dried his eyes, and said to Grace, "Och ! I never was desarving of Mary. Never did she give me a cross word or a sour look, though many's the time I desarved both; and whenever trouble came on us, and mostly always of my bringing on, she bore it so patiently, and was always only thinking how she should com-

fort me, and never remembering herself. Only once she spoke of herself, and how often her words come into my mind since I have been here! ‘Patrick dear,’ said she, ‘I could bear anything; but to have you taken away from me, to see violent hands laid upon you, oh! I’m afraid it would kill me! and then I know your good heart would make you be always blaming yourself, and even in death this would trouble me.’ Yet after all this good advice, I went on, without minding it.

“Och! Grace,” continued the poor man, after a pause, “when will the terrible effects of my folly and bad conduct be over? I am committed here on the suspicion of a murder, a suspicion that never could have fallen on me had I not been known to keep irregular and improper hours; and now I have murdered my own child, and am killing its mother, by that most cruel death, a breaking heart.

Good as Mary is, and sure such goodness was never surpassed on earth, how can she ever look at me without thinking that I caused the loss of the child that we both looked forward to as a new tie to bind us to each other? How can I comfort her for the trouble I've brought on her? and when she thinks of her baby, and often will she think of it, won't the thought be mixed with the cause of its death?—I am that cause."

Grace said all that kindness and pity could prompt to console the sorrow and lighten the remorse of Patrick, and left him not until she had succeeded in reconciling him to himself.

CHAPTER XIII.

Adversity, 'tis thine to prove
The truth of friendship, or of love;
Thy frown can send the false away,
But makes the faithful nearer stay;
Thy chilling breath illusion rends,
And is too cold for summer friends.

Old Fable.

THE meeting between Colonel Forrester and his party with Lord and Lady Oriel, was marked by the most affectionate cordiality; the pale cheek, chastened expression of countenance, and timid manner of Lady Oriel increased the tenderness of her brother, and the deep interest she excited in the rest of his new

family. Mrs. Forrester and she became friends and sisters in heart, and perhaps it would be difficult to find two women so calculated to understand and appreciate each other. Young, handsome, and highly accomplished, married to men to whom they were fondly attached, and without any of the pretensions or rivalry that in general clouds the friendship of women so much as to render it apocryphal, they quickly formed an attachment that promised to be as durable, as it was sincere.

The whole party soon felt as much at home with each other, as if they had been acquainted all their lives. Mr. Desmond accompanied Lord Oriel over his farms, and witnessed the improvements in progress; and Mrs. Desmond drove or walked out with Lady Oriel and Mrs. Forrester in the beautiful park or its environs. The evenings were passed in cheerful conversation, enlivened by music, and the hours flew

with a rapidity only known to those with highly cultivated minds, and in congenial society.

It was evident that the arrival of the party had produced the happiest effects on the master and mistress of Oriel Park. Lord Oriel, in witnessing the cordiality and admiration evinced by the mother and daughter towards his wife, gained more confidence, and was enabled to look forward to her future position with less dread. Morning calls from all the distinguished families in the neighbourhood poured in on them; and the presence of two such irreproachable women as Mrs. Desmond and Mrs. Forrester, failed not to have a great weight in re-establishing Lady Oriel in her former position. Colonel Forrester suggested to his sister the propriety of her giving frequent dinners; and a splendid ball, to which all the ball-going people in the vicinity were invited, was as numer-

ously attended as any fête Lady Oriel had ever given in former days.

At the first commencement of this series of entertainments, Lord Oriel betrayed a nervous anxiety, as if he doubted their success; and the manner of Lady Oriel showed a timidity that denoted she no longer felt certain, as formerly, that she could not fail to please. Colonel Forrester observed this apprehension, and, with his knowledge of the world, felt and declared that all such indications of a consciousness of having been placed in a false position, must be subdued, and an air of unembarrassed ease and cheerfulness assumed.

“But, my dearest brother,” said Lady Oriel, “I feel so alarmed, knowing the frightful things that were said and believed of me, that though innocent, I am always afraid of observing some incivility or slight in the persons who approach me; and when they are kind, I

am so grateful, and think their conduct so good-natured, that I can scarcely conceal what is passing in my mind, or preserve the same ease of manner, as in past times."

"I can understand your discomfort, dear Louisa," replied Colonel Forrester; "and, with your delicacy, and sensitiveness, it is but natural you should feel as you do. But, believe me, the world will always remember the reports in question still more, by your exposition of any consciousness of their ever having existed. Receive, with dignified equanimity, the respect and attention due to your station, and which you feel you have not really forfeited, however appearances may have been against you. But beware of showing either timidity or gratitude, or you will be oftener compelled to suffer from the first, than to have cause for the second."

Each week brought an increase of visitors

to Oriel Park, and its susceptible master no longer had cause to be nervous about the reception of his wife, in his own county at least. Lady Oriel rejoiced, for *his* sake much more than for her own, in having recovered her place in society; for the great world, or rather the circles of fashion that compose it, had lost all charms for her, from the moment she had experienced its frowns, and she only wished her husband could be as independent of it as she was. She felt that a happy home with a few chosen friends, like those at present around her, was preferable to all the gaiety and splendour of a London life; and she ceased to value the admiration she had hitherto so much desired to excite.

Every trial with which we are visited in life, however severely it may be felt at the time, brings with it a corrective for some error,—correctives, that alas! all of us but too much

require. Lady Oriel had suffered severely, and was chastened, but not soured, by the lesson she had received. In ceasing to seek admiration, she had learned to merit esteem; and if she became a less fascinating, she became a more estimable woman.

If, a few days before the arrival of her brother and his party, any one had told Lady Oriel how advantageous its results would be in assisting her to regain her place in society, she would have doubted, or at least have not believed, the extent and the rapidity with which this object would be accomplished; the anticipation would have appeared too flattering to her hopes.

But now that it was achieved, was she as happy as might be expected? Alas! no; experience had taught her the little value to be attached to the occupations and amusements that had hitherto filled up her time, and had

also laid open to her the undue importance her husband placed on that fickle and hollow circle, denominated, *par excellence*, the fashionable world. She saw that on this foundation of sand, Lord Oriel was still disposed to build his and her happiness; and she felt grieved that he could not, like her, choose a more solid foundation. Loving her husband as she now did, even with more tenderness than ever, this want of sympathy was mortifying to her; and she trembled as she reflected, that not on her future conduct, but on her reception by the fashionable world in London, would the tranquillity of her husband solely depend.

“Could we change situations,” said Lady Oriel to herself, “and that *he*, without a crime, had been censured and condemned by the world, should I refer to that world for peace of mind? No, once assured of his honour, and possessing his undivided affection, I would

abandon the circle which had doubted him, and proudly confine myself to the narrow one of chosen friends, who knew how to estimate him."

The quickness of perception of Lady Oriel had led her to detect every symptom of the thoughts and feelings of her husband ; and her heart sickened when she observed his nervous anxiety to ascertain the effect her presence produced in the society around them. To a woman of a proud and delicate mind, nothing is more humiliating than to observe in a husband the semblance of an appeal to the opinions of others in the estimation he forms of his happiness, or of the sources of it. She wished Lord Oriel to be happy, without any reference to the uncertain criterion of fashionable award ; and she was jealously alive to the conviction, now forced on her mind, that never would *he* be happy unless he saw her reinstated in the same brilliant position she

had formerly held, and which her pride shrank from ever again stooping to seek, while her feelings yet rankled under the indignity she had experienced.

The agreeable manners and excellent qualities of the Desmonds and Forresters rendered them universally beloved and respected by all the visiting circle in the vicinity of Oriel Park. They were so cordially pressed to prolong their visit, that they consented to remain until March, when Lord and Lady Oriel intended to go to London for the season, and Mr. and Mrs. Desmond decided on opening their splendid mansion on an extensive scale of hospitality, for the alleged purpose of making their son-in-law personally acquainted with the large circle of their acquaintance, but really much more with the intention of establishing Lady Oriel in that circle. The delicate tact of Mrs. Desmond had prevented her ever touching

on the subject ; but Colonel Forrester, who was in the secret, observing the alarm and timidity with which his sister contemplated her return to London, acquainted her with the project of Mrs. Desmond, and assured her that, from the influence and popularity of that lady, it was certain of being crowned with success.

How grateful did Lady Oriel feel for such true, such rare proofs of friendship ; and how did she thank her brother, to whom she felt she owed it, while he disclaimed all thanks by saying — “ I cannot allow you, my dearest Louisa, to think you owe the affectionate friendship of my wife and her mother to me ; you are only indebted to me for the acquaintance. Your own merits alone have secured you their love, and as they are as sincere as they are warm in their attachments, you may calculate on them for life. There is this difference between them and the persons who com-

pose the fashionable world, that no evil rumour could be for a moment credited by the first, and there is no extent of evil to which the credulity of the last will not lend a willing ear. Such is the difference between true friends and worldly ones, between good people and people of fashion, and from the simple reason that each judges from self."

Lady Oriel conducted her amiable friends to the cottages that were scattered in the vicinity of Oriel Park, where her presence never failed to dispense gladness ; and when Mrs. Desmond and her daughter saw the cleanliness and comfort that pervaded the domestic economy of these humble dwellings, where good order, and a scrupulous attention to neatness, marked the habits of their inhabitants, they sighed at the contrast offered to them in the cottages round Springmount, which, with the exception of that of Grace Cassidy and Mary Mahoney,

presented melancholy proofs of the often-repeated fact, that Ireland is a century behind England in civilization.

Encouragement had not been wanting on the parts of Mrs. Desmond and her daughter, to induce the lower orders in their neighbourhood to adopt the improvements and comforts common to the English peasantry. At their own expense they had chimneys built, instead of the old mode of a hole, with a parapet of dried mud round it, to let out the smoke ; and they had glazed windows made to open, to supply the place of the small square of bull's-eye glass, that admitted but little light, and no air. They had brick floors, instead of the unequal mud ones, half-filled with lodgments of water, and the roofs were ceiled to keep out vermin, and prevent their being, as heretofore, the receptacles of typhus, the vapours of which had lodged in the unceiled thatch. These improve-

ments had been effected, with considerable expense to the excellent owners of Springmount, but had failed, except in a few instances, to answer the desired end—of giving the peasantry a taste for comfort and cleanliness.

“ Sure, the chimney carries off all the hate of the fire with the smoke,” said old Madge Casey, “ and the cabin isn’t half so warm as it used to be ; and then thim plaguy windows lets in so much light, that if there is a speck of dirt, they shows it ; besides, they’re so aisily broken, and then the misthress and the young lady are vexed if we fill up the broken pane with a wisp of straw or ould rags, as we used to do with the ould windows. The floor, too, is so hard to the feet, and must be claned continually ; and as for the roof, sure, it’s as could as ice, and as white and shining too, and keeps none of the hate in, as you may see by its having none of the marks of the smoke on it.

Och ! it's not to be compared to the elegant roofs we had before, with the sticks across for the hens to roost in ; and sure it was so comfortable to have all the cocks and hens over our heads, crowing and fighting, and the pigs rousing on the floor, and muddling in the lochs of water running here and there between our legs, and putting their snouts into the iron-pots, just as if they were their own throuffs, and that they knew they had the best right to 'em, as sure they certainly had, for they were the rale rint payers. But now every thing is changed, and they want to make us English, which they never can do, barring we're born over again ; and sure it's a pity they won't let us be comfortable in our own way. Sure, them English must work like galley slaves, or niggers, merely to keep the house clane ; and what fools they must be to be thinking of the comforts of the house, as if it was a Christian, instead of think-

ing of their own. I dare say the ladies did it all for the best ; but we 've never had a bit of pace or comfort since we took to their English ways ; and as for the poor pigs, sure they 're so lonesome and low-spirited since they 're kept in their styes, instead of having the run of the house, that it 's dismal to hear the moaning and grunting of 'em. The poor cocks and hens, too, are quite on the shockarone ; and the young ducks and goslings, that used to be so happy, swimming in the little ponds of muddy water in the floor, are now straying about as if they didn't know what to do with themselves. Och ! it 's a dismal thing to see a family scattered about in such a manner, that used to be all happy and comfortable under the same roof, fattening and thriving together on the same victual, and, as a body might say, having but the same bed and the same board. God forgive them that 's the cause of all this change-

ment, for I'm sure they meant it for the best."

Madge Casey spoke the sentiments of the greater part, if not the whole, of the old peasantry round Springmount. They could not habituate themselves to the changes, which they were loth to consider improvements, in their dwellings.

"I don't like their newfangled alterations," said Molly Macguire; "sure, it isn't natural that we should be following fashions that those that were here before us never dreamt of. I loved my poor father and mother that's gone to their long home, and I like to remember them sitting one at each side of the chimney-corner, their toes almost in the ashes, their heads resting on their knees, and their short dudeens* in the corners of their mouths, as comfortable as two poor creathurs could be; the house so gay

* Short pipes.

with pigs, ducks, and geese, running about the floor, grunting, quacking, and squalling; cocks and hens crowing over their heads so lively; and the gossoons so happy, tormenting the cat and dog, and baiting their little sisters;—sure it was a pleasant sight, and the ould couple seemed to enjoy it! I could sit down and remember this, till it seemed to be all before my eyes. But now every thing is so changed, that I can't for the life of myself bring 'em back to me, and this bothers me, and puts dismal thoughts into my head; for I seem to be an unnatural child to my poor parents that 's dead and gone, God rest their souls! to turn their fine flouchoo-laugh* cabin topsy-turvy into an English cottage, as they call it; so that, if they were to come back some night (and sure there's nothing to hinder 'em, as many 's the spirits have done before), 'twould drive 'em stark mad to see

* Irish for hospitable.

how every thing is changed, and that their unnatural children wouldn't be content with what was good enough for them. Och, agra! when one has lost those that were near and dear to one, it seems so natural to keep everything the same as it was before they went; for then it seems as if they were not gone quite entirely, and one can bring 'em before one's eyes just as they used to be."

Mrs. Desmond and her daughter saw with disappointment that the improvements they had made had not increased the comfort of the persons they were intended to benefit; and their efforts to ameliorate the condition of a people whose prejudices and habits opposed a powerful obstacle to their benevolent endeavours, were, though not altogether abandoned, greatly discouraged.

Grace Cassidy and Mary Mahoney profited by the countenance and support which they

received. Their cottages were as clean and tidily kept as in England, their gardens as redolent of flowers, and there was even a spirit of coquetry in the care bestowed in the decoration, particularly by Grace, who, having no children to occupy her time, had more leisure than Mary. The fresh nosegays ranged on the dresser as white as unsunned snow, and on which a goodly show of pewter and delf was set out ; the brick floor, cleanly swept, and as red as a cherry ; the windows rubbed bright, and all the rustic furniture shining from the efforts of Grace's hands—all showed the tasteful care, as well as cleanly habits of the tidy housewife ; and her person was as well attended to as her house.

The old neighbours found out that “ sure and troth Grace Cassidy was full of conceit, to have her kitchen as iligant as the parlour in genteel houses, and her garden full of roses,

and other fine plants, just as if it was a gentleman's garden. Sure, poor people didn't want flowers; they were only fit to devart the rich, who had nothing else to do with their money or their time; but faith the pride of some people was mighty great, to be setting up for such grandeur!"

Thus, what ought to have insured Grace the approval of her neighbours, excited only their enmity, as they considered *her* habits a reproach to their own. This feeling was increased by their jealousy at seeing the plain, solid, eight-day clock, brass warming-pan, gridiron, and frying-pan, that were presented to her by Mrs. Forrester, in order that her Irish cottage should have all the appendages of an English one; and they were heard to say, that "sure there would be no living with Grace, now that she was setting herself up as a lady, with her clock instead of an hour-glass."

CHAPTER XIV.

“ We may consider ourselves fortunate when we can acquire wisdom by seeing the consequences of error illustrated in the persons of others, instead of in our own.”

EVERY word which Patrick said, touched a chord that vibrated in the heart of Jim, and all the reflections and advice of Grace failed to produce an equal effect on his mind. Example is always more convincing than precept, and this was never more exemplified than in the altered tone of feelings with which Jim Cassidy returned to his home. Both husband and wife deeply sympathised with the poor prisoner they had left, and the serene aspect of nature

and the pure freshness of the air seemed, from the contrast of the heavy atmosphere and gloomy cell in which they had spent the last two hours, to be still more delightful.

“When will poor Patrick be at liberty to enjoy all that is now refreshing us?” said Jim. “Och! Grace ma-vourneen, when I think that I might have been there in his place, and have seen you shut out from *me* as we were from *him*, sure it makes the heart sink within me.”

“But you forget, Jim dear,” replied Grace, “that I, being your wife, should have a right to stay with you wherever you were, and therefore I’d be with you in that gloomy, narrow cell, for I have no child to keep me at home away from my husband. If poor Mary had no children she would be with Patrick, and then he would not be so miserable, nor she neither.”

“That’s just like your own womanly heart,

to think so," said Jim; "but you don't know the heart of man, ma-colleen: we are proud and obstinate: we are like the oaks of the forest, that stand in pride to resist the storm, and refuse to bend to it, till it strikes us to the earth; but ye are like the delicate shrubs that yield to every breeze, and bend with it, so that ye are not destroyed as we are. If Mary was in that wretched hole of a cell, she would be content because she was near *him*, and doing her duty; but *he* would be always noticing the want of comfort around her, and dwelling on the disgrace of having brought her there, with the bitter thought that it was by *not* discharging *his* duty that they were both there: so unhappy as he is away from her, I think he would be more unhappy to have her there. Then, Grace, every man has a pride for his wife, and though he can bear up against the affronts he has brought on himself, he couldn't bear to see

her with turnkeys and bad people about her. A woman, that's what a woman should be, is as misplaced in a prison as a beautiful fresh nosegay, the sight of which only makes one low-spirited, by reminding one of *where* it came from, and where it ought to be. One would like to keep the wife and the flowers for our own home."

"Yes, Jim dear, I can understand a man's thinking thus, but a woman never deems herself out of her place when she is comforting her husband. Sure, the very words, the holy words of marriage, says, they are never to forsake each other in sickness or in health, in riches or in poverty, and much more in sorrow ought they to be together ; but men are too apt, Jim dear, to treat women as flowers, that are for sunshine and happiness, instead of being charms in gloom and trouble ; whereas we are never so much at home as in comforting the afflicted, and making

those we love forget the cares and vexations that fall on all."

About this period news arrived that Donelly, who had fled for the murder of the policeman, had fallen a victim to a drunken quarrel with some of his reckless associates, and his aged father and mother, whose sole support he was, were now plunged in grief, with no consolation left them, but that, had he been arrested by the police, his life would have paid the penalty of his crime, with all the ignominy attached to such a death ; and from this additional misery, his scarcely less disgraceful, though less publicly disgraceful, death had saved them. Their poor neighbours flocked round to comfort them ; and the worthy rector, Mr. Disnay, afforded them ample assistance.

The unhappy parents, while receiving the generous stipend of Mr. Disnay, administered with no sparing hand, remembered with bitter-

ness, that their unfortunate and guilty son had been one of the most active of the ringleaders in opposing the payment of tithes, and acknowledged how admirable was the creed of that religion which repays injuries with benefits.—“Och! Mich,” said the poor old woman to her husband, “isn’t it a fine thing, and a wonderful thing too, to see Parson Disnay, and all his family, showing such favour to us after all the harm and mischief our poor boy that’s dead and gone did to them and theirs? Well, God rest his soul and forgive him his sins! sure he’d be now alive if he hadn’t followed bad advisers; and it’s only the good pattern that Parson Disnay sets us, in forgiving all our poor boy did against him, that keeps me from going down on my knees to give my ten thousand curses to them Repalers that led our child astray.”

Forgiveness acts as a salve to the wounds inflicted by unkindness, while revenge or ran-

cour but serves to keep them unhealed. The Irish have not been taught to practise this virtue (for a virtue it positively is, and for its perfection requiring many others); but, unfortunately, their passions, quick to be excited and as quick to be appeased, have ever been encouraged to keep alive the spirit of vengeance, as something praiseworthy; while forgiveness they are taught to consider as a proof of a mean spirit and a dastardly nature. So little were the poor and ignorant peasantry capable of appreciating the conduct of Mr. Disnay and his curate, that the instances of their forgiveness of injuries, and repayment of evil with good, were sometimes reputed as indications of their cowardice, meanness, or cunning, or all three united; and this opinion was entertained by a people eminently calculated by nature not only to appreciate, but to practise the virtue they decried. It has been truly

said, that “happiness is but opinion ;” but, alas ! we see examples constantly brought before us that virtue is equally a matter of convention ; and the sister-country proves, that from ignorance and superstition, two giant fiends, beneath whose shadow all goodness becomes blighted, that which is most admirable in religion and morals may, even in the nineteenth century, be as undervalued as it is misunderstood.

In holding up Mr. Disnay and his curate as examples of the advantage to be derived to parishioners from seeing before them men whose lives accord with their professions, we would not have it imagined that good clergymen are wholly confined to the established church. We have known many excellent and worthy priests of the Roman Catholic religion ; but many of their tenets precluded the possibility of their being equally serviceable to

their flock ; and above all, the Divine precept of “ Do unto others as you would they should do unto you ” was never sufficiently inculcated or acted upon, to enable them to subdue the angry feelings or violent actions of their inflammable flocks.

It augurs ill for any religion, when the persons who profess it act in open violation of its dictates. Murder, violence, and rapine, speak little in favour of the manner in which the powerful influence, supposed to be held by the Roman Catholic priests over their flocks, is wielded ; and the constant repetition of such atrocities must dispose all reasonable people to conclude, either that the priests have no power—the most charitable conclusion, or that the country where such outrages stain the national character must have less religion than any other country on the face of the globe ; or, lastly, that the religion professed by the ma-

majority in Ireland is totally powerless in influencing their conduct or feelings—the chief and grand motive of all religion. We are told, and the statement is borne out by the accounts which every week reach us, that the priests are but as the tools of him who rules Ireland ; whose sceptre is a firebrand, never waved but for destruction, and the ignition of the passions of his deluded followers.

What can be thought of ministers of the Gospel, sent to preach peace and good will on earth, who lend themselves to the furtherance of bloodshed, the violation of all laws, and the plans of those who oppose themselves to the legitimate rulers of the land, tracking the path of rebellion by the blood of their victims ? Let us in charity hope that the priests are powerless, that they only yield obedience to the reign of terror they cannot resist, and that when the strong and mighty arm of the

law shall have quelled the anarchy which has so long deluged Ireland in crime, they will show that what has appeared to be guilt, was only weakness, and lend their assistance to soothe angry feelings, and re-establish peace and good order. Let them, by their conduct, prove that the Roman Catholic religion never tolerates crime, whatever may be its object ; and we will be one of the first to render them justice.

CHAPTER XV.

“Are we not join’d by Heav’n?
Each interwoven with the other’s fate?
Are we not mix’d like streams of meeting rivers,
Whose blended waters are no more distinguish’d,
But roll into the sea one common flood?”

“Domestic happiness, the only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall!”

EACH day since their union had served to render Colonel Forrester and his wife more tenderly attached to each other; a great similarity of tastes joined to excellent tempers, kept them in perpetual harmony, and the undeviating affection with which Colonel For-

rester attended to the comforts of Mr. and Mrs. Desmond, was a new bond of union between him and his excellent wife. She repaid it by the warmth with which she attached herself to his sister, Lady Oriel, and the sweetness with which she soothed the occasional moodiness of her Lord. No day passed in which the Desmonds did not congratulate themselves on the son-in-law whom Providence had given them ; and as they marked the happiness of their daughter, how did they rejoice in her choice, and in their ready acquiescence in it.

Mrs. Forrester was now as ladies wish to be who love their lords ; and this circumstance seemed to complete the happiness of the whole family. “ How I hope it will be a son ! ” said Mrs. Desmond, “ that it may be named after you,” laying her hand on that of her husband ; “ it would give me such hap-

piness to see another Walter Desmond as the future master of Springmount."

"But, my dear," replied Mr. Desmond, "Forrester's is as ancient a name as ours, and it would be ungracious to accept this compliment from him, of changing the name of his first-born."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Desmond, "the truth must out, for I cannot keep this, the first secret that was ever between us, any longer. Forrester has told me that his first son is to be Walter Desmond, and that if God grants him a second, he is to be Forrester, with his English estate settled on him. All this he told me very soon after his marriage, but I won't tell you what he said, when he prayed that his first-born might resemble you in every respect, for I should make you too proud."

"The man who was honoured by your

preference, and blessed by your affection for twenty years, my dearest Louisa, must be already too proud to be spoilt by any other circumstance, however flattering ; but I feel deeply sensible of the affectionate delicacy of Forrester, and think we may consider ourselves to have indeed drawn a prize in the lottery of life, in having secured such a protector for our child, and such a companion for ourselves."

The period had now arrived for the departure of the Desmonds and Forresters from Oriel Park for London, and they set out with regret from a place where they had passed their time so happily, and formed friendships which they felt would only terminate with their lives. The gentleness, and various powers of pleasing, which Lady Oriel so eminently possessed, had excited an affection in the minds of her guests, which every day's knowledge of

her served to increase, and she repaid it with warmth and sincerity. Mrs. Desmond she loved and respected as a mother, and Mrs. Forrester she attached herself to as a sister ; and as she had never known either of those precious ties, she yielded to the new feelings of affection which were developed in her sensitive heart, with all the tenderness that formed a part of her nature. In short, the united families presented the rare example of parting with increased regard, after having passed the difficult ordeal of a *séjour* of three months in a country-house, and looked forward with impatience to their meeting in London in a few days.

Had Lady Oriel not been supported by the protecting presence of Mrs. Desmond and Mrs. Forrester, she dared not have contemplated her return to London ; and even with their support, she looked forward to it with dread ; her self-

confidence was gone, and she felt that a look, a whisper, or a cold reception, had power to overwhelm her with confusion and dismay. The conduct of the unfeeling Lady Borrodaile at Keswick, had sunk deep in her mind, was often reflected upon, and never without bitterness, not towards the obtuse and ill-bred matron, but towards herself, for having so far forgotten her dignity as to have placed herself in a situation to be exposed to the rudeness of such a person. Had Lady Oriel known the motives of Lady Borrodaile's conduct, she would have smiled in pity at what had pained her, for the impertinence of that lady had proceeded solely from jealousy and envy, at seeing her daughter overlooked whenever she was in the same society with Lady Oriel; a circumstance that excited in the mind of the mother, a dislike to the fair and innocent cause, and which she seized the first opportunity that offered for displaying.

Had Lady Oriel known that this female dragon of virtue, who pulled her daughter away from a contact with a suspected woman, was in the constant habit of bringing her in close intimacy with women relative to whose reputations suspicion had long been exchanged for certainty, she would not have judged herself so severely as she had done. But, with the delicate susceptibility of a pure and proud mind, she was more disposed to think favourably of the motives of others, than to find excuses for herself. Lady Oriel had yet to learn, that severity towards the errors, real, or supposed, of others, rarely proceeds from a love of virtue or detestation of vice, but are the modes in which jealousy and envy delight to avenge themselves for mortifications, of which, perhaps, she whose beauty or talents excite them, is the only person unconscious. An error in conduct may be overlooked, pro-

vided the sinner is neither young, beautiful, nor clever, the qualities which, alas ! most frequently lead to error, by exciting the admiration that prompts women to listen to the tempter ; but if she be handsome, or clever, or worse — both, then must she expect no mercy from her own sex, and make up her mind to console herself with the occupation which talents never fail to give to those who cultivate them, and which always “ prove their own exceeding great reward.”

There are situations in life in which, because the evil qualities of our natures are not called into action, we believe we have them not ; and others, when, because the good qualities lie dormant, or are chilled by unpropitious circumstances, we imagine they do not exist. Alas ! human nature is a web of mingled yarn, where good and evil are so closely woven together that it is difficult to separate them ; one

is sometimes more visible than the other, but both are to be found in all, the degrees differing only in proportion to the excitement they find.

Without the unfortunate dilemma in which Lady Oriel's imprudence had placed her husband and herself, the defects of Lord Oriel had probably never been observed, for it was this circumstance that encouraged their growth. He had now become so dependant on worldly opinion for happiness, that he lost much of the native dignity of his character; and Lady Oriel saw this defect with sorrow and self-reproach, attributing it to her own fatal imprudence. They left Oriel Park a few days after the Desmonds and Forresters had proceeded to London, and both entered town once more, with mutual fears for the future and painful retrospections of the past.

The Morning Post announced the arrival

of the Earl and Countess of Oriel in Grosvenor Square; and the same paper, among the fashionable parties for the week, announced a grand dinner for Wednesday at the splendid mansion of Mr. and Mrs. Desmond, and a ball for Friday, to which all the *élite* of fashion in London were invited. Lady Oriel found invitations for both; and her brother, a few hours after her arrival, came to urge the necessity of her appearing at them.

The dinner-party consisted of the Duke and Duchess of Heaviland, the Marquis and Marchioness of Bowood, the Earl and Countess of Grandison, and two or three distinguished members of the House of Commons. The party had been arranged with a view to introducing Lady Oriel into the circle to which Mrs. Desmond was most anxious she should belong — a circle wherein the aristocracy of reputation was considered to be *versus* that of

fashionable exclusiveness—the one in which she had hitherto figured.

Lady Oriel could not resist casting a glance at her husband, when Mrs. Desmond presented her to the Duchess of Heaviland, the only lady there with whom she was not acquainted, though her acquaintance with the others was but slight; and she observed that he anxiously watched her reception by a lady who was considered so scrupulous as to female propriety as the Duchess. The *accueil* was peculiarly gracious, because Mrs. Desmond had spoken highly of Lady Oriel. The evil reports in circulation she had never heard, or, if heard, had forgotten; and, even had they been remembered, her knowledge of Mrs. Desmond's character and principles would have led her to disbelieve them. The other ladies behaved just as they would have done in former days; and after the first ten minutes of nervous

embarrassment were over, the marked affection of Mrs. Desmond and Mrs. Forrester, with the manly and dignified bearing of her brother, who being deputed by Mr. Desmond to do the honors *chez lui*, and as host, directed much of his attention to his timid sister, soon placed her at her ease.

In the drawing-room, during the *soirée*, the Duchess expressed her desire to cultivate the acquaintance of Lady Oriel; and a number of other ladies, who came in the evening, renewed with apparent pleasure their former intercourse with her. Lord Oriel observed all this with gratified feelings, and in returning home, remarked what an agreeable day they had spent; a remark that elicited a smile from his wife, who, however satisfied she might feel at the flattering reception she had received on this her first *entré* into fashionable life since she had retired from it, had more than once mentally

confessed, that it was the only dull day she had passed in the society of the Desmonds and Forresters.

She had been enjoying such rationally happy evenings during their stay at Oriel Park, that she found it difficult to reconcile herself to the vapid amusements of balls and routs; and she resolved that, if she was fortunate enough to recover her former position in society, so as to satisfy her husband's susceptibility, she would confine herself as much as possible to the domestic circle, where she felt that true happiness could alone be found.

Cards of visits and invitation came pouring in every succeeding day, to all of which Lord Oriel gave an attention very unlike his former indifference. He had become excessively scrupulous as to the reputations of the ladies on his wife's visiting list, and requested her to avoid two or three who were considered *un peu*

leste, but who were generally received in society. Lady Oriel ventured to observe, that having suffered herself from the malignity of scandal, she thought it wrong to show more prudery than other ladies towards the persons in question. But he with a sigh answered, that it was this very misfortune that rendered it so much more necessary for her to be scrupulous; and though she felt the truth of the remark, it wounded her.

CHAPTER XVI.

London, the mart of luxury and pride,
Where wealth the sceptre holds, and gold's the guide
That leads the crowd, while virtue, talent, sense,
Must be their own exceeding recompense ;
Here scandal finds an ever-willing ear,
And pity seldom stops to drop a tear ;
On paper wings the piquant slanders fly,
And sabbath morns see reputations die.
False friends—true foes—alike press on to read
The tale that dooms some victim's heart to bleed.
Here Fashion, motley goddess, changing still,
Finds ready subjects to obey her will,
Who laugh at nature and her simple rules,
Because they are not form'd for knaves and fools.

London, a Satire.

AN invitation to dinner soon followed the visit of the Duchess of Heaviland to Lady Oriel, and this seemed to afford extreme satisfaction to her husband. Heaviland House was consider-

ed one of the last strong-holds of aristocratic grandeur that London boasts; the style of the mansion, the extreme richness and solid beauty of the furniture, and the almost feudal splendour kept up in the establishment, might well entitle it to this distinction. It was not more unlike the town mansions of the generality of our nobility, than were its owners.

The Duke of Heaviland was a nobleman of high character, reserved and dignified manners, amiable disposition, and domestic habits. With a true taste for magnificence, he avoided all ostentation; and though his immense fortune and high character gave him great weight, he took little part in public life, and contented himself with discharging the duties of his elevated station with scrupulous exactitude. He had filled the situation of Viceroy, in Ireland with impartiality and credit; had visited the French court as ambassador extraordinary, and

left behind him, in France, a deep impression of the splendour and hospitality of the English nobility, which few were so well calculated to represent with dignity, as the Duke and his amiable Duchess. The Duke's politics were high tory, and had always been so consistent, reasonable, and moderate, as to gain him the respect of all parties.

The Duchess of Heaviland was exactly the wife suited to the Duke, and fitted to fill the high station she held. Sensible, mild, dignified, and perfectly unaffected, she pursued the even tenour of her way, avoiding all cliques, and confining her society to a select circle, as irreproachable in morals as elevated in rank. No petty competition, no political intrigues, no assumption of leading or driving the world of fashion, ever actuated the Duchess of Heaviland's movements. She stood proudly aloof from the crowd, supporting with dignity "her

place of state," respected by all, and beloved by those who had opportunities of knowing her.

It was during her Grace's *séjour* in Ireland, as the representative of female majesty, that Mrs. Desmond's acquaintance with her ripened into a strong and cordial friendship, and had since been maintained by frequent intercourse and correspondence. And it was at the desire of Mrs. Desmond that the Duchess cultivated the acquaintance of Lady Oriel, as hitherto, her Grace had rarely sought any intimacy with the members of the clique, to which Lady Oriel had formerly belonged, from their being, as she observed, too fashionable, and too gay for her sober habits.

The gentleness and decorum of Lady Oriel's manners had strengthened the favourable impression given of her by Mrs. Desmond, and each interview increased the Duchess's admiration and good opinion of her. The Duke and

Lord Oriel also formed an intimacy which brought them often together; and the select and distinguished guests whom the Oriels frequently met at Heaviland House, all sought the acquaintance of Lady Oriel, who, as the constant associate of the Duchess of Heaviland, soon became as *recherchée* in the best society, as even her fastidious Lord could desire. Those who had formerly dropped off from her, now as eagerly sought a renewal of her acquaintance, and she conducted herself so mildly and decorously towards them, that they accused themselves of injustice, in ever having doubted her purity.

This was a triumph to Lord Oriel, and seemed all that was requisite to his happiness; his pride in his wife no longer humiliated, he became cheerful and gay, and a succession of *recherché* dinners, and brilliant *soirées*, once

more enlivened his elegant residence in Grosvenor Square.

The Desmonds and Forresters, to whom Lady Oriel owed her reinstatement in society, were delighted beyond measure at witnessing the happiness they caused; and all was sunshine and gaiety in the two families, who never passed a day without meeting, and felt that each interview only rendered them mutually dearer. Colonel Forrester and his Frances made the house of Mr. Desmond so agreeable, that it was quoted as offering the pleasantest society in London; and the worthy pair seemed to grow young in witnessing the happiness of their children.

Lady Oriel and Mrs. Forrester were at the Opera, and Lord Albany entered their box. "I hope, ladies," said he, "that you are delighted with the ballet of Faust. You must admit that the music is as pretty as it is original; and the

March, infernal as it is meant to be, is very fine. I like the Opera better than any other theatrical amusement," continued Lord Albany ; " the hour is more suited to one's habits ; for really it is *bien gênant* to be obliged to swallow one's dinner, and drive off in a state of personal discomfort, to arrive when half the new comedy or tragedy is over, and be told that the most effective scenes have passed. Then the sort of dinners one gets preparatory to a play—I think of them with horror ! To dine *dans une bonne maison* the day of a premeditated visit to the theatre, is out of the question ; so one is forced to hurry over soup and *cotelettes, à la minute*, at Crockford's, at the risk of burning one's mouth ; and drink wine half-iced, denying oneself the gentlemanly comfort of discussing a dessert ; and then ' to be taken (as the poetical apothecary's label directs) and well shaken ' over the *pavé* in a cabriolet, one is out of

humour before one arrives, digestion is deranged, comfort destroyed, patience put *hors de combat* ; and, consequently, one is little disposed to judge favourably of the entertainment, and one leaves the theatre, vowing that we have now neither dramatic writers nor actors ; and all this because we have been *derangé*, and that if we will not change our hours, so they will not change theirs."

" But would it not be a good plan to go to the theatre without dining," asked Lady Oriel, " and sup afterwards? by which means, all the disagreeable effects you have so pathetically deplored would be avoided."

" *Helas ! mes dames*," said Lord Albany, " I have tried that plan ; but it answers not. From going without dinner, one is apt to make a more substantial supper, and this banishes sleep. The ghosts of the murdered lamb, chicken, &c. sacrificed to our appetites, rise up

in judgment against one, presenting even more hideous visions than those which murdered the slumbers of Macbeth."

"How much more you men think of dinners than we do!" said Mrs. Forrester.

"I own that in general we do," replied Lord Albany; "for *la gourmandise* is not a female vice. Still, who can deny that much of our comfort depends on our dinners? and he is therefore wise, who, reflecting that as we must dine three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, resolves to dine well, in order to spare the stomach and its poor dependant, the temper. I never dine with Lord Refton without feeling a happier and, I do believe, a better man for the rest of the evening; 'my bosom's lord sits lightly on its throne,' because the stomach is not weighed down with any 'perilous stuff.' His *plats* are so delicious, so *épuré* from all that is gross, that they can only send light and

agreeable vapours to the brain; and this accounts for *his* being always gay, *spirituel*, and amiable."

"I know not if this be the cause," said Lady Oriel, "but I am ready to admit the effect; for Lord Refton is very agreeable and *spirituel*."

"Oh! I do assure your ladyship," replied Lord Albany, "that my theory on this point is irrefutable. Good cooks make agreeable men. Only compare the most gifted conversationist, even Moore himself, after a dinner at Refton's, or in an ordinary house with the same guests, and he would be no longer equally brilliant. I have thought of searching into history, to discover the materials of which were composed the particular repasts eaten by the remarkable men of the last century the day of, or the day previous to, any remarkable action, as I am convinced it would elucidate my system.

Only fancy what a load of responsibility would be taken off from poor human nature, by discovering that all our crimes proceeded either from a bad dinner or the want of a dinner, and ascertaining that

‘ When poor fellows go astray,
Their dinners are in fault—not they.’ ”

“ I must say, you talk *con amore* about dinners,” said Lady Oriel; “ you would almost persuade one you thought of nothing else.”

“ *Apropos* to *con amore*, as beauty always is to hearts,” replied Lord Albany, “ who is that very handsome woman opposite to us? she might make one forget dinner and supper too.”

“ That lady,” said Lady Oriel, looking at her through her glass, “ is the wife of our most popular writer, and is remarkably beautiful; features, complexion, expression, all are fault-

less. Mr. Desmond pointed her out to me the other evening as one of the very few perfect specimens now to be seen of a beauty peculiar to Ireland: hair like the wing of the raven seen with the sun's rays full on it, and skin white as the driven snow, with eyes of Heaven's own blue. The lady comes of an ancient Irish race, and belies not her blood, which sends that mantling rose-tint to her cheeks, 'as if she blushed because she is too fair.'"

"A *mauvaise honte*," added Lord Albany, "that few ladies are guilty of for such a cause! Look into the parterre, and you will see talking together two of the men who have the most succeeded in fiction—Moore the poet and Lord Fableton. Both have made reputations from the exercise of the same power—imagination; but such is the prejudice of society, that while one is admired and followed as a poet, the other is decried and shunned as a ——— liar. Imagi-

nation, which is the Eldorado of the poet and of the novel-writer, often proves the most pernicious gift to the individuals who compose the talkers instead of the writers in society. How strange does it appear to casuists," continued Lord Albany, smiling, "that one man with his plume can soar into the regions of fiction, and gain immortality by a brilliant fable; while another, using his tongue instead of a pen, and adhering to prose instead of verse, becomes stamped with the degrading epithet of a liar, and all from a different use of the same faculty ! What a poet would my poor friend Lord Fableton have made, had he turned his inventive powers to good account, instead of being, as at present, considered an emulator of the Baron Munchausen !

"I was present the other evening," continued Lord Albany, "at the reading of a poem from the pen of a celebrated author.

‘What a brilliant imagination ! what invention !’ was repeated at every side ; and albeit unused to the approving mood, I was forced to yield assent to their well-merited commendations. I left Grosvenor Square duly impressed with the advantages of imagination, and wishing that I, too, could find a ladder to mount into this palace of gold, and bear away even a little of its dust. With this feeling I entered White’s, and seated myself, inwardly invoking the aid of imagination, until my invocations were interrupted by the voice of my imaginative friend, Lord Fableton, who related tales and anecdotes which satisfied many of his hearers that he was in his anecdotage, and stated as facts the bright effusions of his brain. The past, present, and future, were equally and impartially misrepresented, and the poem I had heard read in the early part of the evening, contained much less invention than his con-

versation. No sooner had he withdrawn, than the circle he had left commented most severely on his want of veracity. ‘And this,’ thought I, ‘is the reward of genius, and such is the invidious distinction made between men of equal powers of imagination. One gains immortality by his pen, while the prejudices of society stamps my poor friend as a liar, only for having *spoken* his bright imaginings—he ought to have been a poet.’—The young lady next the Irish beauty is the authoress of ‘Romance and Reality,’ and of several exquisite poems, full of imagery, and of a fancy that would not have shamed Hafiz himself.”

“I have read her novel,” said Lady Oriel, “and think it exceedingly clever; the dialogue epigrammatic and sparkling, displaying all the freshness and gaiety of youth, with the observation of maturity.”

“How very well Lady Elsimore is looking this evening!” said Mrs. Forrester.

“ She is very handsome certainly,” replied Lady Oriel ; “ indeed so are all the family ; and I remember being particularly struck, when I saw her and her sister the late Lady Usridge for the first time, both fair and with an air so *distingué* and *comme il faut*, each adding to the charm of the other ; indeed I never see the living sister without thinking of the lost one, the beautiful pendant that Nature gave her. Then in the box to the left, is the authoress of ‘ The Buccaneers,’ one of the best novels that has appeared for a long time, full of incident and interest, powerfully sustained and clearly developed.”

“ When you visit Ireland, dear sister,” said Mrs. Forrester, “ you will be better able to appreciate the truth and beauty of this lady’s Irish Sketches ; they are portraits from the life, and full of truth and beauty. The wife of one of my father’s tenants, Grace Cassidy, with

whom I long to make you acquainted, is just the heroine for the graphic pen of Mrs. Hall, who alone could do her justice."

"Mrs. Desmond has been telling me so much of this pretty peasant, this fourth Grace," said Lady Oriel, "that I already take an interest in her, perhaps not the less because I hear she is as pretty as good."

"Who is that very pretty person opposite to us?" asked Lady Oriel.

"That," said Mrs. Forrester, "is Lady Ridney, who turned the heads of all our Dublin beaux, without ever for a moment losing her own; I never saw a young person so little elated by universal admiration. The lady leaving the box next Lady Ridney's, is the authoress of, what shall I say, half the popular novels of the day, among which there is not a single failure; her books give you all the sparkle of fashionable life, without any of its

inanity, and her fecundity of imagination is as extraordinary as her facility of language; she appears never to tire herself, and certainly never tires her readers, for she is always brilliant and often profound.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ The world ’s all title-page—there ’s no contents ;
The world ’s all face ; the man who shows his heart,
Is hooted for his nudities, and scorn’d.”

“ Ce ne sont ni les lettres ni les sciences qui nuiront jamais à l’énergie du caractère. L’éloquence rend plus brave, la bravoure rend plus éloquent ; tout ce qui fait battre le cœur pour une idée généreuse double la véritable force de l’homme, sa volonté. Mais l’égoïsme systématique, dans lequel on comprend quelquefois sa famille comme un appendice de soi-même ; mais la philosophie, vulgaire au fond, quelque élégante qu’elle soit dans les formes, qui porte à dédaigner tout ce qu’on appelle des illusions, c’est-à-dire le dévouement et l’enthousiasme, voilà le genre de lumière redoutable pour les vertus nationales.”

“ AND so you advise me,” said the Duchess of Wellinborough to her Duke, “ to continue to visit Lady Oriel.”

“Decidedly,” said the Duke; “if, as you say, you believe her to be innocent with regard to the scandalous reports in circulation.”

“But what will the world say? And if, as I suspect, a party is made against her, my single countenance can do her little good, and may do me much harm.”

“My dear Jane, I am shocked to hear such sophisms from your lips. The same mode of reasoning has ruined many a woman; because while each of her friends, if friends such calculators might be called, stood aloof for fear *she* should be the only female ready to do a kind and charitable action, the poor woman has fallen to the deepest depth of the slough of despond, *planté* by those on whom she reckoned in her hours of need; whereas, if each individual had had moral courage, and gone to the rescue of her whom they believed guiltless, they would quickly have found others to

follow their example. It is not the crime, but its consequences, that you all dread. Selfishness has taken the place of all natural feeling: you are willing to be on terms of intimacy in society with those of your own sex, about whose conduct you cannot doubt, because they happen to be received, yet draw off in terror from some you loved, and do not suspect, because scandal has seared what vice could not sully. If you were all ignorant of the misconduct of those you continue to visit, I should hold you blameless; and if you believed the scandal propagated against those you discard, I should consider you conscientious, but not cruel; while as it is, I think you both, and so thinking, avow that selfishness and gross insensibility have demoralised you all."

"How very harsh you are against the women!" said the Duchess, "as if they only were insensible and selfish."

“ Pardon me,” said the Duke ; “ I am willing to admit that the disgusting defects I have named, are even more prevalent among men than women. With us, a man dare hardly perform a service, attended even with the semblance of the slightest personal sacrifice, without the risk of being held up to ‘ the world’s dread laugh,’ and being pointed at as an enthusiast, *un tête foible*, a man who is the dupe of the designing. All this is very dreadful ; for, be assured, when we are arrived at the point of considering generosity, disinterestedness, and goodness, as proofs of weakness, we are not far from looking on their opposites as praiseworthy. Misfortune, however unmerited, and error, that existed only in appearance, and never descended to reality, meet with few advocates at present ; while undoubted guilt, if upheld by circumstances, passes current in society : and all this injustice proceeds alone

from selfishness, as people are neither more severe nor malicious than formerly ; they are only influenced by the fear of injuring self. This is felt in the senate, in the clubs, in fact, in all places. A charge likely to affect the reputation of any individual, however unfounded or improbable it may be, is sufficient to annul friendships of long duration ; and former friends are content with hoping the charges may be untrue, instead of taking pains to prove them so. But *en attendant*, what could they do ? They could not act in opposition to the opinion of the world, and, therefore, the friend is sacrificed to the only friend of the egotist—self.”

“ But as we cannot change the world,” said the Duchess, “ we must submit to it.”

“ Yes,” said the Duke, “ on the same principle that you ladies spoil your *femmes de chambre*, and having rendered them tyrants, instead of useful servants, submit to the nui-

sances you have made. Each of you women of a certain rank forms a pillar that supports the artificial edifice, called the world of fashion. The pillars are of marble, substantial, and, alas! cold, as well as polished; but the edifice is but of *gauze diaphané*; all that passes within is detected, as the gauze is too clear to conceal defects, though it shades slight spots; and the pillars are considered, like those that supported the skreen at Carlton House in former days, as good columns, but supporting *nothing*."

"How very odd it is," said the Duchess, "that I should have fancied you would have rather approved than disapproved my leaving off Lady Oriel! I suppose, then, you will no longer object to my receiving Lady Baskerton."

"*Au contraire*," said the Duke, "I will never consent to it. This is the first error of which Lady Oriel has even been *suspected*. You disbelieve the charge, and so do I; but

admitting, for sake of argument, that she was not blameless, it is always charitable to look mildly on a *first fault*, because it prevents the recurrence of many another :——besides,

‘ To err is human, to forgive divine.’

But when error is repeated, and that, as in the case of Lady Baskerton,—

‘ The last lover’s welcome as the first,’

there can be no excuse for clemency. She has been warned by the oft-reiterated tales of scandal propagated at her expense, and should either have corrected the reality or the appearance that led to the rumours. You are unspotted in reputation, my dear Jane, and, therefore, can afford to be charitable to the erring or the suspected. This is one of the happy privileges of undoubted virtue, and the worst that can be said or thought is, that the undoubted virtue was naturally undoubting, one of the highest

compliments that can be paid to your sex. The defalcation of such women as you, must pass the sentence of ostracism on Lady Oriel ; and could you, believing her guiltless, be the means of injuring her ?”

“ I shall certainly call on her to-morrow,” said the Duchess ; “ for you will do me the justice of admitting, that I never oppose myself to your judgment.”

“ But to return,” said the Duke, “ to the subject of the systematic selfishness that pervades society at present—I assure you, Jane, that it is distressing to witness it. In the senate, men are ashamed to give an *élan* to the noble and generous sentiments that animate them : at the bar, legal technicalities and satirical pleasantries supersede the bursts of eloquence and feeling that formerly resounded from the barristers, in defending virtue or exposing vice ; and in society, men encounter each other

armed against any display of high feeling, lest they be laughed at as enthusiastic or romantic, two terms now received as the acmé of reproach and ridicule. I wish a few of us plain honest men would take courage, stand by each other, dare to avow our pretensions to generosity and manliness, and show that there is a still greater ridicule than that of being considered unselfish and unknowing—the ridicule of being ashamed of being neither. Madame de Staël profoundly observed, ‘that there are many men received in the best society, who, if accused of a dishonourable action, would reply, *It is possible that the action was wrong, but, at least, no one dare tell me so to my face.*’ She adds, ‘Nothing can convey a stronger idea of the utmost depravation; for where or how could society exist, if people were to kill each other; to have the right to do all the evil possible; to break one’s word, and to lie, as long as it is not per-

mitted to tell the person he has lied — in fact, to separate honour from bravery, and to transform courage into a means of committing or defending bad actions?’ It is thus, my dear Jane, that we lose the substance of all that is good and noble, and adhere only to the shadow; and this is the most hopeless of all states. Few pause to ask, is Lady C—— or Lady D—— really culpable? the only question is, are they received? and if they are, they may continue to enjoy all the advantages of a good reputation, while they are universally known to have a bad one. Can any state of society be worse than that of receiving women, of whom nearly the whole of that society have the very worst opinion, and for receiving whom they can give no better excuse than that they are received elsewhere? The same facility exists with our sex. I meet men continually in the best society, whose reputations have long ceased to be

doubtful, and have heard jokes passed on their alleged want of principle in the houses, and by the persons who invited them. One of the many bad effects of scandal is, that its general extension accustoms people to hear the most dishonorable reports, without being either much shocked or surprised. They think on these subjects as the French writer did on another, when he said, ‘*Ce n’est rien s’il ne le sait pas, et peu de chose s’il le sait.*’ The scandal, if true, is now of slight importance, and if untrue, of less, provided the person incurring it is supported by her clique; and this, Jane, I call demoralization.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Society itself, which should create
Kindness, destroys what little we have got :
To feel for none is the true social art
Of the world’s stoics—men without a heart.”

“ But this is worshipful society,
And fits the mounting spirit, like myself.”

THE Duke of Lismore, long the patron of arts and fashion, himself the nucleus of a circle round which were continually revolving all that was bright, fair, or gifted, now opened Lismore House; and Lady Oriel, the Desmonds, and Forresters, were amongst the first invited to the concert and ball, with which his Grace

commenced the festivities of the season. Mrs. Forrester had been requested to chaperon Lady Lucy Forbes, a young female friend, just making her *début* in the fashionable world, and as she joined Lady Oriel with her protégée, who was new to life, that is to say, "Life in London," the two ladies undertook to initiate her into a knowledge of the most distinguished members of fashionable society.

"Who," exclaimed Lady Lucy Forbes, "is that beautiful woman with the oriental face? How lovely she is, and what an intellectual countenance!"

"That," replied Mrs. Forrester, "is the celebrated Mrs. Grantly, no less remarkable for her beauty, than for her genius and talents. Does she not look the very personification of a muse? What a classical style of beauty, and how much expression is joined to that oval face, and those exquisitely chiselled features! how

delightful to witness such a rare union of beauty and genius ! Look at her deep lustrous eyes, bent in languor, as if she thought not how many were seeking to catch their recognition ; and now look, she speaks, and raises those brilliant orbs as if to make us doubt which is most beautiful, their animation or their repose. Every line of her poetry is to me fraught with a recollection of her lovely face ; it haunts me, and is my very *beau idéal* of what a *Corinne* should be. For a long time, I was afraid to read the productions of Mrs. Grantly, lest they should disappoint me. I thought it impossible that great talent could be joined to so much beauty ; but I have learned to estimate them for their intrinsic merit, without any reference to their beautiful author ; and it is no faint praise to say, ‘ the mind keeps the promise we had from the face.’—That dark-haired lady with the fine expressive face, is the Countess of

Guernsey: is she not brilliant and sparkling? What eyes and teeth, and what a cream-coloured skin and richly animated tint on her cheek! It was to her, or her portrait, that Byron wrote those exquisite verses lately published; and it was of her that the Emperor Alexander of Russia observed, that she had too much beauty for a woman who wished to derive no advantage from it. Her reputation has, however, derived an advantage from it; for she has proved the possibility of great personal charms and high spirits being accompanied by a *retenue* of conduct that has defied even the suspicions of slander. Though an indefatigable leader of fashion, nay, by some considered an agitator, or dictator, she has escaped unharmed from the dangerous ordeal of female prudence, and ranks high in the list of unexceptionable wives and mothers."

"Who is that tall, noble-looking man, with a forehead resembling the busts of Demo-

sthenes, who is now talking to Lady Guernsey?"

"That," said Lady Oriel, "is Lord Rey, the premier, does he not look formed to fill a high and important post? What a dignified air and distinguished bearing he has! He seems the very personification of aristocracy, from his intellectual-looking head to his finely-formed legs and feet. He is accused by many of being *fier*, but the charge only arises in the accuser's ignorance of his character. If he has *fierté*, it is only that of a proud consciousness of his own high reputation; and who would not be proud of it? See him with his family and friends, and it is impossible to meet a person more natural, kind, and unpretending.

"That fair, languid, handsome lady covered with jewels, is the Marchioness of Stuartville. She was an heiress, which, in general, might serve for a synonyme for 'spoiled child;' but of how few spoilt children could it be *only*

said, that her sole besetting sin is a passion for diamonds, if it be a sin? and she excuses this by saying, that they are the only bright things that do not fade."

"Oh! pray tell me who that dull-looking man is, that has fixed himself on Mr. Luttrell, who appears to wince under the infliction?"

"That," said Mrs. Forrester, "is a man, who, without any one qualification for shining in society, believes himself to have as many as Athenæus thought necessary for the formation of a cook, when he states that a *chef de cuisine* ought to be a mathematician, a theoretical musician, a natural philosopher, and a natural historian. Mr. — is only a natural-fool; but, unfortunately, he is filled with pretensions, and consequently is a most tiresome personage. You observe that short gentleman near the Duke of Lenox? He is the person of whom George the Fourth observed, on seeing him in uniform, that he must be a megalomaniac."

saure, an antediluvian reptile, with paddles instead of legs, and clothed in mail."

"Our host does the honours extremely well," observed Mrs. Forrester; "how general his civilities are! After all, politeness ought to be added to the list of the cardinal virtues, for how many of them depend on it! At all events, politeness makes us forget the absence of virtue, and the want of politeness its presence."

"What!" interrupted Lord Albany, who overheard the last sentence, "moralising in a ball-room? and eulogising virtue and politeness in a scene where only the semblance of both are tolerated? Virtue, like a portionless beauty, has more admirers than followers; and politeness, like love, is only approved when oneself is the object. I dare not remain to hear my aphorism refuted," continued Lord Albany, gliding away.

“No, stay until I have replied to your aphorism by another,” said Lord Montagu, who joined them in time to hear the retreating peer’s observation; “and do not fly like a Parthian, throwing a dart as you retire.”

“I fled, not from a dread of being refuted by you, Montagu,” said Lord Albany returning; “it was the ladies,” (bowing,) “that I feared; so now for your aphorism.”

“Remember,” said Lord Montagu, “you depreciated politeness and virtue, and I say, ‘*Les esprits légers font beaucoup de mal, quand ils se mêlent de juger les sentimens, qu’ils ne sauraient comprendre.*’”

“And I must reply,” said Lord Albany, laughing, “that I am willing to be ranked in the list *des esprits légers*, if you are in that *des esprits forts* ;” and the laughing Albany retired, leaving Lord Montague to continue his *persiflage*.

“ I have been pointing out the various persons who have passed before us to Lady Lucy,” said Lady Oriel, “ and fear I have but ill-performed my task. I should have had your Lordship, or Lord Albany, to act as showman, and then I am sure Lady Lucy would have had a piquant epitome of the character of each person.”

“ That depends,” replied Lord Montagu, “ on how the persons to be described stand with the world, for I confess that, from a natural indolence of disposition, I am rather disposed to think well of those who are well with the world, and *vice versâ*, which verifies the proverb that ‘ *Le monde est un joueur, qu’on a toujours de son parti quand on gagne.*’ ”

“ And I,” said Mrs. Forrester, “ am always disposed to doubt the justice of the sentences that the world passes on hearsay evidence, as I think the world a good witness on a trial, but a bad judge.”

“One thing you must admit,” said Lord Montagu, “which is, ‘*Si méchant que soit le monde, il ne nous ferait pas grand mal si nous n’étions pas si souvent son complice.*’” And so saying, the peer passed on, leaving Lady Oriel to reflect on the truth of the axiom, and to apply it to her own peculiar case.

“*On ne connaît bien tout l’étendue d’un malheur que lorsqu’on s’en accuse,*” thought Lady Oriel to herself, as she recurred to the past; “I cannot blame the world for wounding me with the arms which I presented to it. The fault was all my own.”

CHAPTER XIX.

Les gens vertueux sont rares, mais ceux qui estiment la vertu ne le sont pas ; d'autant moins qu'il y a mille occasions dans la vie, où l'on a absolument besoin des personnes qui en ont.

MARIVAUX.

LADY ORIEL observed, and the reflection sank deep in her mind, that all the charity shown in drawing favorable conclusions on her recent *esclandre*, emanated from those who were pure and unsuspected themselves, and who judged her by the criterion of their own hearts. In no instance had she met with slights from a woman of undoubted virtue ; while, on the contrary, she had experienced

various indications of rudeness from ladies who had been compelled to profit largely by the charitable interpretations put on their conduct, and who, feeling how little they merited the forbearance shown them, were disposed to believe that she too stood in a similar position.

It is fortunate for the sinning, that there are many good and virtuous people in the world, otherwise how could one half of society meet the other? The vulgar phrase of set a thief to catch a thief, would be more than verified by the instinctive tact with which certain errors would be detected and exposed by those who had known them by personal experience; confidence would be destroyed, because one of its best guards, a belief in virtue, would no longer exist; and *médiance*, which always prevails in proportion to the degree of corruption in society, would become general.

The trial Lady Oriel had passed through, determined her on never again living in habits of intimacy with ladies whose reputations were too apocryphal to admit of their judging with charity, or supporting a tottering friend.

Among the acquaintances she now sought to cultivate, the wife of the Premier, and the Marchioness of Bowood, were distinguished. The first lady, from the high official station of her husband, was called to take a lead in society which her domestic habits had hitherto led her to decline, though her various accomplishments and dignified manners peculiarly fitted her for the post of honour. Lady Rey was always cited as an example for mothers and wives; and her daughters emulated her virtues. Married in early youth to a nobleman no less distinguished for his high character than for his brilliant and solid talents as a statesman, and who sought for happiness and

repose from his political duties, where only it can be truly found, in the bosom of his family, —the domestic circle of Lord Rey had become proverbial for the exhilarating example it furnished of harmony and rational enjoyment. Even he, the supposed misanthropic poet, whose sarcasms have touched all circles, and spared none, never recurred to the family of the Premier without commendations whose warmth proved their sincerity; and he has been often heard to say that one such family might reconcile even a sceptic to the belief in virtue and goodness.

No wonder, then, that Lady Oriel was anxious to become something more than a guest at the grand receptions of Lady Rey, and that she desired to be admitted to the more select re-unions,—a distinction that was soon accorded her.

The Marchioness of Bowood had long been

on visiting-terms with Lady Oriel, who rarely missed any of the *soirées* at Bowood House ; and the amiability and kindness of its owners, so generally felt and acknowledged, had given a peculiar charm to its society. In the splendid gallery at Bowood House, filled with the finest productions of art, might, during the season, be seen all that London could boast of rank, genius, and talent. Statesmen, poets, wits, authors, and artists, were here to be met, enlivened by a galaxy of female beauty, furnishing subjects of inspiration for the chisel or the pencil, or realising the dreams of the poet. Nothing could be more judicious than this blending of society ; and the *soirées* at the Marchioness of Bowood's were considered to offer more various attractions than those of any other house in London ; the very locale of the splendid suite of rooms assisting to give a charm to them.

“ Pray look, Lady Lucy,” said Lady Oriel, “ and tell me if England has not reason to be proud when she can show such specimens of beauty as those in that circle ; no other capital in Europe could, I am sure, produce them.”

“ Who is that handsome woman,” asked Lady Lucy, “ whose eyes outshine the diamonds on her brow ? How very lovely she is ! and how completely aristocratic is the character of her beauty,—delicacy supported by conscious dignity, and *fiercé* softened by feminine mildness !

“ That,” replied Lady Oriel, “ is the young Duchess of Lenox ; and that distinguished-looking woman on whom she leans, and who displays pearls, when she smiles, that rival the oriental ones on her neck, is her sister, the Marchioness of Burton. What a fine animated expression of countenance, fierce, and almost

stern in its expression when grave, but beautiful when she smiles. They are the daughters of the Marquis of Mona, and are justly considered one of the handsomest families in England. Of them indeed it may be said, ‘all the daughters are virtuous, and the sons brave.’ That lovely blonde, who is speaking to the Marchioness of Burton, is the Lady Augusta Garing. Is she not the personification of a poet’s bright imagining, blooming as Hebe, and almost as celestial? Purity and innocence are enshrined on that fair brow, and the fairy foot that peeps forth from her robe, might serve as a model to the sculptor.”

“She is indeed most lovely,” replied Lady Lucy; “and so is that lady now entering.”

“That is the Marchioness of Glansicarde,” said Lady Oriel. “Is not talent marked in every lineament of her beautiful face? But how could it be otherwise with the daughter of such a father? at least, according to my belief,

that talent is hereditary. The two ladies at the door are Lady Yesterfied, and her sister, Mrs. Branson. They might serve to personify the morning and evening stars; both charming, and yet unlike each other. Their family are remarkable for beauty, and I understand equally so for goodness. That handsome woman is Lady Emeline Hart Burtley, a young poetess of much brilliancy and imagination. Her poetry resembles the exotic production of warmer climes; bright, luxuriant, and fanciful. The lady next her is a *bas-bleu*, in the best acceptation of the phrase, being not only highly learned, but full of talent. Mathias, than whom no better judge can be found, pronounces her the best Italian scholar of our day; and her translations of Petrarca are the best I know. Lady Norely, who is now speaking to Lady Lacre, is another of our literary ladies, and is remarkable for the sprightliness of her wit and the soundness of her understanding."

“ You are very kind, dear Lady Oriel,” said Lady Lucy, “ to have told me the names of all these beauties and *bas-bleus*, therefore I won’t be so *exigeant* as to ask you to name the other lovely faces I see around. They look like a *parterre* of the richest and rarest flowers, each rendering the other more beautiful by its vicinity.”

“ How pleasant it is,” said Mrs. Forrester, “ to rest the eyes on such an assemblage of beauty ! and yet there is something melancholy too in the pleasure ; and I could almost weep, as did Xerxes when he contemplated his soldiers, as I reflect how fleeting are the charms which now dazzle our eyes, and that a few years will have faded their lustre ! There is something very touching in the wreck of beauty ; it is difficult to believe that the silken tresses, starry eyes, cheeks of rose, lips of coral, and teeth of pearl, now before us, may be sought for in vain, some years hence.”

“ We must only console ourselves,” replied

Lady Oriel, “with hoping to find a successional crop of beauties, the daughters of those now before us, springing up to take their places. Are not the roses of this summer as fresh and blooming as those of the last? and do we not look forward to seeing the next vernal season bring forth as bright ones? So it is with beauty—as fast as one race fades, another succeeds; and it is only eyes dimmed by age, which discover that the last are inferior to the first, for contemporaries deny this decline.”

“There are many specimens of the florid gothic here,” said Lord Dorville, joining in the conversation, “that would confirm your last remark, Lady Oriel, which I inadvertently overheard, and which proves the truth of the old proverb, ‘that listeners never hear good of themselves,’ for I am old enough to have lost every trace of humanity, as far as externals go, and yet I passed in my day for what the ladies call a very pretty fellow. You look

very incredulous, fair ladies," said the fine old peer; "but I refer you to your grandmothers, and to a certain portrait, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. I come to assemblies like this once or twice a-year, and go home comparing notes between the beauties of the night and the beauties of forty years ago. *On dit que les absents ont toujours tort*, and I believe it is so, for I find myself quite as well satisfied with the faces before me," (bowing to them,) "as I ever was with the beauties that charmed me in my youth, though the turbaned dames newly restored and varnished, whom I meet in the saloon, observe to me how the present race has degenerated, and call on me to furnish evidence of the superiority of the first, to the present, every look of theirs rendering the comparison almost ludicrous."

CHAPTER XX.

“ Would you Fashion’s temple see ?
Lovely ladies, come with me.
There you ’ll find what’s rich and rare,
All that can adorn the fair ;
Di’monds from Golconda’s mine,
Em’ralds, rubies, sapphires shine,
Sending forth a thousand rays,
Or concentered in a blaze ;
Laces, satins, velvets sheen,
That might deck the proudest queen;
All for lovely woman sought,
From remotest regions brought.”

LADY ORIEL and Mrs. Forrester having promised to take Lady Lucy Forbes shopping, conducted her to Howell and James’s, in Regent-street, an establishment that astonishes a novice in London more than any other, and

which quite bewildered the youthful Lady Lucy.

“What a delightful place !” said she ; “ what exquisite things ! Do you not come here very often, dear Lady Oriel ? Oh ! I must buy that wreath ; it looks as if the morning dew still trembled on its leaves, it is so fresh and blooming.”

Lady Oriel, amused with the unsophisticated raptures of Lady Lucy, told her that she dared not come *very* often to Howell’s, for fear of making her too proud of belonging to a sex, in whose honour was raised such a temple. Behold,” added Lady Oriel, “ the zephyry laces, more delicate than the finest web that the hapless Arachne ever spun, and diaphané gauzes from France, ethereal as the drapery of the cloud that deceived Ixion. See the rainbow-tinted chintzes and muslins, with the soft-textured silks and satins of England. The

velvets of "Genoa the superb," the delicate poplins of Ireland, the cambrics of Scotland, the treasures of the Indian loom; the brilliant gems of Orient dazzling the sight, and the perfumes that "breathe of Araby the blest" stealing on the senses from their crystal prisons; the most remote regions ransacked to bedeck us, and the productions of all climes brought to adorn us. All this," continued Lady Oriel, laughing at her own description, and the gravity with which Lady Lucy listened to it, "is calculated to impress a woman with too great an idea of the importance of her sex, for whom alone this splendid pile is reared, and therefore I do not indulge myself often by coming here."

"And I," said the artless Lady Lucy, "should like to come every day, even if I had not the power of buying, merely to look at such beautiful things as I see around me."

“ You remind me,” replied Lady Oriel, “ of the *naïve* question of a clever English child to her mother at Venice, on seeing the Place St. Mark for the first time. ‘ Pray, mamma, are people allowed to see this every day, or only on holidays ?’ ”

The rooms at Howell’s were filled with handsome and well-dressed women, all admiring and admired ; and the suite where the jewellery is displayed, exhibited a “ chosen race of fashion’s favourite sons,” examining the *bijouterie*, and deciding on the relative merit of turquoises or sapphires for buttons ; or whether a Trichinopoly or Maltese rose-chain was the most *distingué* for the evening. At one counter was a young lady with her mamma, choosing her first ball-dress, and in deep consultation whether it should be virgin white or *couleur de rose* ; and at the next were two pale and melancholy-looking women, selecting grey and black for their second mourning for a mother.

Lady Oriel and Mrs. Forrester both mused on the reflections the scene around them gave birth to, but Lady Lucy could do nothing but wonder and admire ; and when music stole on her ear, and advancing to the place whence it proceeded she saw an exquisite clockwork group of Chinese musicians, and a rope-dancer performing evolutions, and pointing the light fantastic toe with a precision worthy of Monsieur Paul himself, there were no bounds to her childish delight, and she stood quite as amused as the beautiful children who were near her, applauding the graceful dancing and perfect time of the Chinese. “ Happy age, when every thing can please !” thought Lady Oriel. “ How long will it be ere this fair creature has learned to look on all that now enchants her as coolly as I do ? May she at least be spared the lesson that has for ever removed the veil of enchantment from my eyes, and

never have to accuse herself of the folly which has purchased my worldly wisdom !”

“ I thought,” said Mrs. Forrester, “ that this establishment had been peculiarly dedicated to ladies ; but I see here all the young men of fashion about town ! Do they come to admire the ladies, or the scarcely less beautiful objects of taste around ?”

“ Both, I would charitably suppose,” replied Lady Oriel. “ How busy they all seem ! That group of young men are selecting waistcoats of tints as various as the minds of the buyers, and which, ere a week has passed, will be adopted by all their set. Another are choosing breccaded satins for their *robes de chambre* ; and the sentimental are debating whether a bracelet or a ring would be the most appropriate *cadeau* to the ‘ Cynthia of the minute ’ of their fancy. Husbands come here to select peace-offerings for petulant wives, or

souvenirs for tender ones ; lovers to bear away some *gage d'amour* to *les dames de leurs pensées* ; brothers to buy gifts for sisters, and sons for fond mothers ; and many a young man to purchase *milles jolies choses* for the person dearest to him on earth, whose image, reflected in the glasses around, shares his admiration with the pretty things he is selecting ; need I add, that person is—himself ? Foreigners are more surprised at the magnificence of this establishment than at any other in London,” continued Lady Oriel. “ I once accompanied some French ladies here ; and they were so astonished at the display of riches at every side, that they could not for an hour pause to select the articles they came in search of. I remember one of them observed to me, that if Paris had such a house, half the husbands would be ruined, as French ladies cannot resist temptation as the prudent English do.”

It was not without repeated hints that Lady Oriel and Mrs. Forrester could get Lady Lucy away ; and she left Howell's declaring that, now she found it was not dearer than other houses, and had so much more beautiful things, she never would go into another ; holding up her empty purse in triumph, the contents of which had furnished her with, as she said, fifty of the loveliest, most useful, and tempting things, when she thought that twice the sum could not have purchased half of them !

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Ye gods ! ye gods ! and must I hear all this—
And not e’en Joseph’s arithmetic miss,
Nor Cobbett’s speech, to prove the rich and great
The working classes wrong, defame, and hate—
And, for a few good speakers, that are seen,
‘ Like angel visits, few and far between,’
To break the dull monotony around,
And give us sounding sense, not senseless sound,—
To hear night after night, and curse my fate,
The same weak arguments and long debate ?”

St. Stephen’s.

LORD ORIEL, Mr. Desmond, and Colonel Forrester, agreed to go to the House of Commons, to hear the debate on the Irish Bill. On

their way, Colonel Forrester proposed a wager to Lord Oriel, as to how many times within half an hour the two words "*the people*" would be used in the first speech of a repealing member.

This led to Mr. Desmond's observing, that these two words, though so continually used, never failed to produce a certain effect. "Joined together," said he, "they have a magical influence that rarely fails to draw attention, and acts as a claptrap to the lower classes of the community, as does some liberal sentiment introduced into a dramatic performance and addressed to the gallery; both are in general used for the worst purposes, and how seldom for any good! Does a democrat wish to excite a tumult and draw attention, as a means of attaining some object of egotistical ambition, to gratify which the peace of his country would be readily sacrificed by him?

‘ the people ’ is the watch-word for revolt ; and repeated with due emphasis, gains him a crowd of idle followers, too lazy to work, but not ashamed to steal ; who throw up their hats, and give him their ‘ sweet voices ! ’—the why or wherefore, they can hardly tell. Does a dramatic writer bestow his tediousness on a suffering audience, anticipating the fate of his maudlin production ? he sprinkles it over with a few liberal sentiments, addressed to popular feeling, in order that the applause of the gallery may drown the disapprobation of the boxes and pit. Thus are the people and liberal sentiments made the tools of those, who never use them except for their own private ends, and who deride the folly by which they profit. It was truly observed by a French writer, that the people are always the instruments, and always the pretext, but *never* the object in a revolution ; and the termination of every revolution has proved the

truth of this observation — the people, who are the many, being sacrificed for the benefit of their democratical leaders, who are the few.”

They arrived in time to hear Mr. Manley make his admirable speech—a speech that positively electrified the House; and to witness the discomfiture of him, whose equivocating defence filled with disgust a nation accustomed to reverence veracity too deeply ever to shrink from its laws, whatever may be the consequences. Mr. Desmond had not been at the House of Commons for many years, consequently many of the faces of the members were unknown to him, but Lord Oriel undertook to point out the most remarkable of them.

“That tall, thin, distinguished man, with a forehead that would have enchanted Gall or Spurzheim, I need not name to you, as every one knows Sir Francis Ramsbury, and I may add, every one esteems and respects him; he is

an admirable speaker, and what is better, an admirable man. The person next him you of course know; he is your Secretary, Mr. Manley, a man of great talent and power, and formed to take a leading part in political life. He has all the requisites for a public man: high personal and mental courage, strict principles, and eloquence that never degenerates into bombast or hyperbole; he is always listened to with attention by the House; and the man whom one of the Irish members denounced as the most unpopular man in Ireland, has the consolation of being one of the most respected in England. It appears that the office of Irish Secretary, which certainly, however it may be a post of honour, is decidedly a post of danger, may now be considered as the trial for young men of high talent. We have had three examples of remarkable men who have filled it; the Duke of Wellington, Sir

Robert Neil, and the present occupant; and three such predecessors must always incite a successor to distinguish himself. By the by, there is Sir Robert Neil; I hope he may speak, as few know Ireland so well as he, and none can describe what has come under his observation more forcibly, eloquently, or truly. He is an able man, and a perfect master of business; much too clever, and useful, not to make me wish he was employed. Such men as Sir Robert Neil, who have great stakes in the country, are the safest to be employed in steering the bark of the state; and we have too few who to great talents unite a large fortune, to spare the services of such a one, whose opinions carry so powerful an influence with the sensible part of the community, and who, having much to lose, cannot be suspected of being disposed to risk it by hazardous measures. That tall, gentlemanly-looking person, who has just en-

tered, is Mr. Hutler Lergusson, the warm and eloquent defender of the Poles. And there at his left you see the gifted author of a series of novels, any one of which must obtain for their author a literary fame rarely accorded to any author, but more particularly to one of his years, and still more rarely merited. That gentleman he is talking to, is his brother, a highly-gifted young man. The two gentlemen to the right are Mr. Errice, the brother-in-law of Lord Rey, and Mr. Makaully. The first is a most clever, sensible man of business, and the speeches of the other tell you better than I can, what his powers are. The Agitator, of course, you know by sight—there he is; his countenance is good, and peculiarly Irish; his voice well suited to the powerful bursts of eloquence with which he inundates his auditors; and it must be admitted, he is one of the most effective speakers in the world, as he dazzles

where he cannot convince ; and though he often leaves Reason free, he makes captive the Passions, which but too generally prevent her using her freedom."

" You should see the effect of his eloquence on the Irish," said Mr. Desmond ; " it is magical. When he said a day or two ago that *he* represented Ireland, it was not so hyperbolic, as the expression borrowed from Louis XIV. by Napoleon, when he said '*Je suis la France !*' He represents the whole Roman Catholic population of the lower class, for they only see, hear, believe, act, or think, as the Agitator tells them ; or rather should it be said, *they* represent *him*, being but the instrument of his will, wielded as he thinks fit. I wish Mr. Thiel would speak, though, perhaps, it may be as agreeable to read his speech, as to hear him deliver it. His mind is so imbued with poetry, that it comes forth without effort,

nay, as it were, *malgré lui*, and his images are so poetical and forcible that one cannot help wishing they were embodied in a poem or tragedy, instead of in a speech. Thiel is a man of genius, and I am one of the many who wish that all such were addressing posterity by the midnight lamp at home, instead of addressing St. Stephen's, as it is easier to find good speakers than good writers; and of the best speeches that have been made on popular topics, how few will be read ten years hence! I never come here," continued Mr. Desmond, "and hear the plaudits bestowed on any of the popular speakers, without reverting to other days, when Pitt, Fox, Grattan, Sheridan, and Canning, were wont to electrify the house. How often have I heard them, and owned the magic influence of eloquence kindled by genius. It seems to me as if the plaudits given to their successors awaken the echoes in the house of

death so near us; and that from their very tombs is sent forth a reverberation, to cheer others in the path in which they strove. From St. Stephen's to Westminster Abbey the distance is short, but the road is difficult; and those who have traced it so gloriously, led on by genius, and supported by principle, sleep calmly the sleep of death, unmoved by all that could once animate their glowing souls, within a few paces of the scene of their past triumphs. What a contrast between the scene of turmoil and worldly cares before us,—the passion-stirring harangues, and the angry rejoinders,—and the awful silence of the house of God, where reposes all that was earthly of those deathless souls!"

Lord Oriel, seeing that the old man was moved with the reminiscences he had called up, and fearing the excitement might be too strong, proposed to leave the house, and they returned home.

Colonel Forrester escorted Lady Oriel and his wife to Vauxhall, thinking that the more his sister was seen in public at the present crisis, the more advantageous it would be in checking the injurious reports circulated about her. Lords Montagu and Albany joined them ; the latter declaring that he had come to walk off the possible effects of a most inimitable dinner at the modern Lucullus's, Lord Refton, where one was sure to dine in the salon of Apollo.

“ You, Forrester, understand a dinner,” said Lord Albany, “ and therefore I wish you had partaken of that which we enjoyed to-day.”

“ Do pray, Lord Albany, instruct us novices in the mystery of *la cuisine*,” said Lady Oriel, “ and tell us what you consider a good dinner ; and, if not impertinent, may I ask you to give us the *menu* of that which has elicited your commendation?”

“ I am proud and flattered by the request,”

said the peer. “ Indeed I take a pleasure in seeing a taste for the table extending, and in forwarding this rational taste as much as I can, by judicious praise when merited, and disapprobation when otherwise. Hitherto it has been a general observation, that the English know how to *eat*, but not how to *taste*,—a reproach that almost stamps us as barbarians. A faultless cook was not only meant to satisfy the appetite, but to excite it; whereas our barbarous Anglais look more to quantity than quality, and are satisfied with thinking they are eating French dishes, when they are devouring some *entrées* that no *gargotier* on the Boulevards at Paris would acknowledge. But to return to Refton’s dinner—he had *la bisque d’écrevisse bien liée sans être tournée*, rivalling that of the Rocher de Cancale; *le potage printanier, tout verdoyant de fraîcheur, l’éternel turbot et la sauce d’homard qui faisait ressortir sa blancheur*,

et qui devoit lui rappeler le corail qu'il avoit quittée nouvellement, tel que sa fraîcheur l'attestoit."

"You really get poetical in your description," said Colonel Forrester; "hitherto I have been of opinion that poetry proceeded from the heart, but I now begin to think it may originate in a neighbouring region."

"My dear Forrester, if you interrupt me, I shall never get to the end of my *menu*," said Lord Albany. "*Le filet de bœuf étonné de son déguisement à la Napolitaine. Le quartier de chevreuil, fâché d'être mariné, pour être présentable, et vexé de s'être nourri d'herbes aromatiques en pure perte. Les filets de volaille à la Royale. Les boudins à la Richelieu; les cotelettes de pigeon à la Dusselle, la timbale à la financière. Entrées parfaites qui attestoient et le gout exquis de l'artiste, et les finances de l'hôte.* I have obeyed you,

Lady Oriel, and almost fear I have bored you too, as I have observed that in eating, as in all other sciences, it is necessary to discuss it *con amore*. But *en vérité*, when I think of the vast obligation that this most admirable and useful of all the sciences owes to Refton, under whose fostering care it is daily extending, I am apt to grow enthusiastic."

The party were amused with the affected gravity with which Lord Albany dwelt on the subject, and Lady Oriel promised that next season she would consult him in the choice of an *artiste de cuisine*, as otherwise she should be afraid of inviting him to dinner.

"*Apropos* to dinner," said Lord Albany. "A man is now passing, whom I cut last year for two reasons—first, that I found it easier to cut him than his *fricandeau*, which was impenetrable to the *spoon*, and the barbarian advised me to try a knife; the second,

that the Goth had a *purée de truffes* ! *Imaginez vous*, a substance that should be *croquante*, served as *purée* ! There was no speaking to him after such a solecism in civilization. I shall never forget the dinner he gave us that day. *Soupe à la reine, tournée* ; fish, guiltless of having seen its native element for weeks ; *vol au vent, qui auroit impunément affronté le vent d'est, les escaloppes de lapereau qui, comme dit Boileau, sentoient encore les choux dont ils furent nourris*, and the impenetrable *fricandeau*, before named. I always judge of a man by his dinners ; and as they are the only things emanating from him that I can profit by, if they are good, I cultivate his friendship, if bad, I bow out of it, as no man ought to demand the sacrifice of his friend submitting to starvation or indigestion because *he* chooses to keep a bad cook. All men past twenty-five, and most men under it, seem to think—

‘ Their various cares in one great point combine,
The business of their lives, that is—to dine.’

‘ So much superior is the stomach’s smart,
To all the vaunted horrors of the heart.’ ”

“ What a strange creature is Albany !” said Colonel Forrester, as they drove off from Vauxhall. “ To hear him descant on the mysteries of the *cuisine*, one would suppose that he thought of nothing else, and yet he is, perhaps, one of the best-informed men in England, full of talent, and with powers of being satirical, from the lightness and plaisanterie of his *coup de pattes*, that few ever possessed without abusing; but he is so thoroughly good-natured, that, unlike the generality of wits, he prefers his friends to his jokes, and suppresses many a one calculated to set the table in a roar.”

“ This is a great merit,” said Lady Oriel, in an age when people attend so little to the feelings of others, and think more of mak-

ing a reputation for wit than they regret unmaking the reputations of half their acquaintance, for one is very often the consequence of the other. Half the *plaisanteries* that do so much mischief, and give so much pain, proceed less from malice than from the desire to shine ; and this desire is so general, that people attempt to say sharp things, who can only say coarse ones. It is like endeavouring to cut a hard substance with a paper-knife ; the intention obvious, but the effort is unsuccessful. If, therefore, those who have really power to shine at the expense of their friends and acquaintance, use it not, they have double merit, and the more so, because the world seldom gives them credit for their forbearance."

"It is strange," said Mrs. Forrester, "to see satirical people so well received in society, even by those who suffer the most from them."

"It is precisely because they fear to suffer still

more, that they act the *aimable*," said her husband ; " but of this be assured, that if satire was not universally acceptable, we should have fewer satirists. The very persons who affect to be shocked at some cutting epigram, pointed lampoon, or piquant anecdote, are the first to engage the author, or to repeat the effusion with a moral disclaimer, of ' How very shocking it is ! ' ' How ill-natured ! ' and a hope that ' there was no foundation of truth in it. ' "

" Why, my dear brother," said Lady Oriel, " where can you have formed such opinions of the world ? "

" In the world, my dear sister," replied Colonel Forrester ; and be assured, there is wisdom in the old proverb,

' Chi pensa male spesso l'indovina. ' "

" I shall grow afraid of you," said Mrs. Forrester, with a glance, in which less of fear

than love was visible, “as I shall begin to think you judge from self, and if you judge so harshly of the world, with such opinions, you cannot love.”

“Ungrateful that you are,” said the adoring husband,

Cara al mio cuor tu sei,
Ciò ch'è il sole agli occhi miei.”

She placed her white and dimpled hand on his mouth, to stop the continuation of his address, and he kissed it fondly though she affected to chide him.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Think on mercy !

Mercy ! the brightest diadem of empire !

Mercy ! that does distinguish men from brutes,

And kings, that use it right, from common men.”

“ The good are better made by ill—

As odours crush'd are sweeter still !”

WHEN we read the fearful catalogue of crimes that the Irish newspapers are filled with, it is difficult to believe that the people committing them can have any of the good qualities with which we love to invest the Irish. Bravery, for which they are proverbial, is ill shown by

the most barbarous murders ; and generosity, to which they are certainly not without claims, is not visible in the revengeful spirit that is but too often displayed in the vengeance with which they visit real or supposed offences. And yet they are brave, and generous, notwithstanding the enormities into which they are hurried ; for their crimes, paradoxical as the opinion may appear, are but the excesses of the qualities we have named, and which, if cultivated, would produce flowers and fruit instead of poisonous weeds.

Ignorance is the bane of the Irish peasant ; it leaves him open to the tyrannical mental empire of those whom interested motives may lead to usurp it ; and, unguarded by principles, the only true barriers for resisting evil counsel or example, with excitable feelings, warm imaginations, and no judgment, he falls a ready victim to their designing arts.

“ Don’t you think, Jim dear,” said Grace, “ that it would be a good thing to write a line” (as a letter is always called in Ireland) “ to Miss Desmond that was, to ask her to spake a word to the dear ould masther, in favour of poor Patrick. Sure, if they were to transport him, ’twould be a terrible thing ; I won’t let myself think that they would do worse than that to him : but the notion of his being taken away from Mary, now that his eyes are open to his own folly, makes me very unaisy. Miss Desmond, that is Mistress Forrester, would put in a good word to the ould masther, and the masther would spake to the King, and ask him to write to the Lord Liffenant to let poor Patrick out of jail. Oh ! this is a good thought, and a lucky one, and I’ll write the letter before I sleep. Mistress Forrester is too good to refuse spaking to the masther. She was always kind ; and now that she has a loving husband of her

own, she'll feel more than ever for a poor creature of a woman that's in danger of losing her's. The ould masther will never refuse her, for he is always glad to do a kind action; and as for the King, I'm not a bit afraid of his refusing the masther, for every one says he has the best heart in the world. The only one I'm afraid of is the Lord Liffenant, for he being on the spot in Ireland, and seeing with his own eyes all the wickedness and mischief the foolish misguided people commit, won't be so aisy on prisoners as the others; but I don't think he'll refuse the King, if he writes him a line — and then we'll have poor Patrick home again with Mary."

"Sure, Grace a-vourneen," said Jim, "the Lord Liffenant couldn't in dacency refuse the king, who's the head of all, like: and he himself, the lord liffenant I main, is one of the most forgiving, grand-hearted men in the world, so

he'll be sure to send down a pardon if he's asked."

Grace and Jim made a *détour*, that they might visit poor Mary Mahoney, and found her better and her boy much less feverish. She was filled with thankfulness at the good accounts of her husband ; but still the love of the woman triumphed over the prudence of the wife, as she expressed her hopes that poor dear Patrick wouldn't take it too deeply to heart, nor blame himself too much for their trouble. Grace assured her that Patrick now had a perfect sense of his own imprudence, adding that they found him reading his Bible, the salutary effects of which study were already visible in his altered sentiments.

This last intelligence gratified Mary beyond measure. " This is indeed," said the poor woman, " happy tidings for me, for I know by experience the comfort that blessed book will give him. Many and many's the weary and sor-

rowful hour that I have been relieved by reading it, when poor Patrick first took to following the Repalers, and that I fell into fretting. I never opened it but that the words fell on my heart just like, as they tell me, oil falls on the sea, making it quite calm. And sure, how can I be thankful enough for knowing how to read, which opened this blessing to me ! How often have I lamented that poor Patrick was not reading it with me ! But just see the goodness and mercy of Providence, that out of every trouble can make good : Patrick is taken up for a crime of which, God be thanked ! he is innocent ; and the separation from me, and the death of our poor infant, has turned his mind to the only true comfort that can be found. There he is, in that solitary cell, reading the word of God, and fixing his thoughts on Him in whom alone is safety ; and I am thankful that his eyes are opened, though at the price of so much grief.”

Grace Cassidy lost no time in addressing

Mrs. Forrester, or Miss Desmond, as she still loved to call her, and the next day's post saw the following letter dispatched.

“MOST HONOURED LADY,

“In all my troubles, and I have lately had my share, you have always appeared to me as the guardian angel that was to save me. I do not now address you for myself, as, God be thanked, Jim has grown wiser, and I trust will never again give me cause for unhappiness. But Patrick Mahoney is pining in a prison, and his poor wife, Mary Mahoney, is lying on the bed of sickness and sorrow, having lost one child ; and the rosy-cheeked curly-headed boy whom you and the dear mistress used to admire, is dangerously ill, while the loving husband and fond father is kept away from them.

“It is in your power, dear and honoured

lady, to extricate him from the doleful cell in which he is now shut up, with no other company but his own sad thoughts, and his angry conscience always reminding him that, had he followed good advice, he would now be at home with his wife and child. I pity Patrick even more than poor Mary; because her conscience has not fallen out with her, and must be saying comforting things in the midst of all her troubles; and sure, dear lady, it is a blessing to have a companion which we never can be rid of, like conscience—a friend, instead of a foe.

“I thought of all this when I saw how she bore her troubles, and laid her dead baby in the coffin, with a look which I never can forget; it seemed as if she had found courage and consolation from a voice within her own mind; and sure enough, that voice must come from conscience. But when I saw the care-worn

face of poor Patrick, and the tears falling down his pale cheeks—and oh ! for certain, 'tis a bitter sight to see a man weep—quite as different to the tears of a woman, as an April shower is to the pelting drops that are forced from some black cloud by the winter's storm—I thought to myself, dear and honoured lady, that it was a blessing when we had only to weep for misfortunes ; but that the scalding tears wrung from us by our own faults, if they leave their marks on the cheek, leave more fearful marks on the heart from which they spring.

“ Patrick is accused of being concerned in the murder of a policeman ; he is entirely innocent, God be thanked ! but he says, that if he had not been in the constant habit of leaving his poor woman, and being out at unseasonable hours in the night, he would not, he could not, have fallen under such a bad suspicion. What I beg of you to do, is to get the dear ould

masther to spake to the King; every one says he is a good, humane, tender-hearted gentleman, and to ax him to write a bit of a line to the Lord Liftenant, to let Patrick home to his poor wife.

“What makes me so anxious at this present moment is, that the Irish Laider has been writing to tell us, that the soldiers are going to be let loose on us, like blood-hounds, and that instead of being tried by judge and jury, prisoners are to be judged by young officers come from school, who would rather condemn 'em than not. I don't much believe all this, but still it frightens us; so, for God's sake, send the ould masther to the King at once. Or may-be 'twould be as well for yourself, dear lady, to spake to the Queen, for women are always tender-hearted, and can pity each other, and she 'd spake to the King, or may-be write to the Lady Liftenant to get poor Patrick off.

“Sure it would be a good thing, and a great service to Ireland, if theould masther would just tell the King, that the quiet and dacent people in Ireland—and there’s many more of ’em than is supposed—are afraid of their lives of the wicked disturbers, that are bent on mischief, and are ready to kill, maim, or destroy all who won’t join ’em. Many’s the poor men that goes with ’em through fear of losing their lives, or having their houses burned over their heads; but if once they had soldiers and officers to take their parts, would give up all nightly meetings and disturbances, and sleep in peace.

“Another thing that frightens the poor people here out of their wits is, that they are tould that there’s six hundred—I won’t write the bad name—in the Parliament Commons, that’s determined to do ’em mischief. Until now they thought the English was their

friends, and they had confidence ; but you know, dear lady, how aisy it is to make a poor Irishman believe anything. My own poor honest husband was made to believe he was a slave and starving, when he was at liberty to attend all agitation meetings in the country, and had aten a hearty dinner off as elegant a piece of salt pork, as red as a rose, with cabbage like the green leaves of young trees, so fresh and bright, and potatoes laughing out of their skins for joy at being aten.

“ How I wish you were all over here now ! The place is so beautiful, the sky looks more blue than ever, and the river more clear ; and as for the trees and flowers, sure they ’re as bright in their freshness as if they came out spic and span new for the first time, though we ’ve now been looking at ’em, and a pleasant sight it is, for the last six weeks. The birds are singing on every branch, and more blackbirds and thrushes than ever ; and

I'm sure the English birds can't sing more sweetly, nor the flowers smell more delightfully, than they do at Springmount; though all the world declares that everything in England is finer than here.

“ And now it's time for me to finish this long letter. I know your goodness so well, that I'm sure you'll pardon my boldness in writing it; and yet when I think how many long miles 'twill have to go over, and the wide green sea to cross before your own pretty eyes will look at it, I don't feel half so courageous as when I used to be tould to walk up to Miss Desmond's room at Springmount, and that I used to tell you all that was passing in my poor ignorant mind. But here, you had woods, and mountains, and flowers, and green fields, about you, and seemed as fond of 'em as I am, which gave me courage to spake to you; for I used to say to myself, sure the young mistress, great a lady

as she is, loves all that I love, and therefore I needn't be afraid to open my heart to her ; but now you are in London, with only great large houses, and Lords and Ladies about you, I'm almost afraid you won't feel the same to your poor country-woman, who is ever your obedient humble servant,

“ GRACE CASSIDY.

“ If not too great a liberty, might I beg my humble duty to the dear masther and mistress ?”

Poor Grace's letter was read aloud at the breakfast-table by Mrs. Forrester, and though many passages in it elicited a smile, the simplicity and single-heartedness of the good young woman, drew commendations from all.

Mr. Desmond observed to Colonel Forrester, that the *naïveté* of Grace, in requesting that the King might be entreated to write to his Majes-

ty's representative in Ireland in favour of Patrick Mahoney, reminded him of the Roman Catholic custom in Italy of praying to God to influence their patron saint ; and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to persuade Grace, that the Lord *Liftenant*, as she calls the Viceroy, is not in Ireland a more powerful person than the King himself.

Instead of obeying Grace's desire of addressing the King, Mr. Desmond wrote to the two most influential magistrates in his county to interest themselves for poor Patrick, and make his innocence manifest—a proceeding she would have thought much less advisable than that which she counselled ; as Grace, in common with all the persons of her own class in Ireland, entertained an implicit belief that *interest*, and not *justice*, was the best thing to be sought ; or rather, that the latter could only be obtained by the former.

A disrespect for the laws has long been prevalent in Ireland, and has led to the certain and injurious effects of a scepticism in justice. A criminal entertains a strong hope that the *interest* of his landlord, or some one else whose interest can be obtained, will save him from the merited punishment of his crimes; and the innocent, though conscious of his freedom from the guilt imputed to him, is "afraid he'll suffer, for sure he has no *interest* to get him out of his troubles." The demoralizing effects of such a state of things is best proved by the actual condition of Ireland, where Law and Justice are supposed to depend on power and interest.

"Well, what if I did give Jack Brohy an unlucky blow, that knocked the breath out of his body, and sent him to sleep in the churchyard, instead of his bed, sure the masther can get me off; he knows all them that will be on

the jury, and they wouldn't like to affront him by finding me guilty. And does not he know the Judge himself? sure they all go to eat their grand dinner at the great house."

This is the way of reasoning and thinking of the lower classes in Ireland; and until they are taught to respect the laws, and look with confidence for justice, there is little hope or prospect of their amendment.

Every day's post brought Mr. Desmond letters from his agent and steward, filled with alarming accounts of the increasing tumult and disturbances in his county; many of the houses of his tenants had been attacked, and plundered of arms; threatening notices had been served on all disposed to pay tithes, or take farms at a higher rent than the former tenant paid. The steward stated, that the English bailiffs of several of the gentlemen in the county had received notices to quit their situations or pre-

pare for death, and that he feared he should shortly receive a similar one, from the indications of wrath and ill-will he saw in the persons around him.

When Mr. Desmond communicated the contents of these letters to Colonel Forrester, the latter told him that he thought it was their positive duty to return to Ireland, and endeavour, by their presence, to restore tranquillity at least to their own immediate neighbourhood. While admitting the propriety of the measure, Mr. Desmond sighed at thinking how little inducement his native country held forth, even to the best-disposed of her gentry, to make it their permanent residence, when he, who had done violence to his taste, in abandoning the society of his English friends and connexions from a sense of duty, and never placing himself on the decried list of absentees, found himself no longer beloved or trusted by those to whom he had been

an indulgent landlord and kind protector for so many years.

When Mrs. Desmond and Mrs. Forrester were made acquainted with the intention of their husbands to return to Ireland, they declared their determination of accompanying them; though both the gentlemen proposed their continuing in England, being fearful of exposing them to the dangers of a country in a state of turbulence almost bordering on open rebellion, as Ireland was represented to be. The gaieties of London Mrs. Forrester could abandon without a sigh, but she felt the deepest regret at the thought of being separated from Lady Oriel, to whom she had become fondly attached; though she was comforted by the reflection, that they should leave her re-established in society, and her husband no longer suffering from either slights or indignities offered, or supposed to be offered to her.

When the ladies drove to Lady Oriel's to acquaint her with their approaching departure for Ireland, they found her with Lord Oriel, to whom she had been complaining of the fatigues, mental and personal, which she was suffering in consequence of the continued round of gaieties and constant late hours to which she had lately been exposed; and he was admitting that she looked ill and languid, and wanted rest.

No sooner had Mrs. Desmond announced their intended departure, and her deep regret at their approaching separation, with her hope that at some period Lord and Lady Oriel would come to Ireland and see the future estates of their brother, than Lady Oriel, stealing a supplicating glance at her husband, exclaimed, "Oh! how I wish that we were going with you! how delightful to see the Lakes of Killarney, and the fine woods and mountains that

dear Frances has been telling me so much about !”

Mrs. Desmond expressed how much gratified her circle would feel at such a visit, and Lord Oriel, to the joy of all, declared his willingness to accompany them to Ireland as soon as they pleased.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ Wealth is the magic wand that makes all fair,
However foul it might have been before ;
It hides deformity, gives youth to age,
Makes dullness bright, and blockheads pass for wits;
Nay, glosses o’er our crimes, and gilds our vices.
There are but two things wealth can never do,
Give happiness, or add one hour to life.”

Old Play.

IT was arranged that Lord and Lady Oriel should accompany the Desmonds and Forresters to Ireland, and that they should leave London in a fortnight, to allow time for having Springmount put in readiness for their reception.

They were all invited to a grand fête at Mr. Vernon's, whose wealth and splendid style of living made him a conspicuous character; who, though sneered at by the beau monde, as *un nouveau riche*, and a parvenu, yet found his dinners, *soirées*, and balls, attended by all the individuals the most *à la mode* in that *beau monde*.

The influence of wealth over those who can never, in any way, benefit by it, is as extraordinary as it is general; and in no way is this more clearly proved than by the facility with which a supposed *millionnaire* finds himself established in the aristocratic circles in London on something even more than on equal terms; as there is a pretension and purse-proud assumption in a parvenu that leads him to take liberties in retaining the position he has usurped, which a nobleman would never dream of practising.

The fête to be given by Mr. Vernon was expected to be the most brilliant of the season,

and Rumour, with her hundred tongues, was sending forth inflated descriptions of the preparations making for it. Temporary rooms, and new conservatories, were to spring up as if by the hand of enchantment, and all the flowers of all the gardeners around London were commanded: nay, it was almost insinuated that a fine night was also commanded; for what is it that wealth is not supposed capable of accomplishing? and that of Mr. Vernon was boundless.

While all London, which means the fashionable part of it, were anticipating the fête, let us take a peep at the givers, and, Asmodeus like, display the feelings that actuated two persons supposed to be amongst the happiest in London, it being the received and established opinion that wealth can buy happiness as well as other rare things. Were the interiors of many a mansion, where riches most abound, laid open to our view, we should discover the fallacious-

ness of this belief—a belief that forms no part of the creed of those who possess this envied wealth, though many have sacrificed youth, health, and affection to attain it, discovering, alas ! too late, that it cannot ensure that for which they have toiled.

SCENE — THE MORNING ROOM OF MRS. VERNON.—A CONJUGAL TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

“ How often must I repeat to you, Mrs. Vernon, that you mar all my projects, by the extreme civility of your manner ? I carefully observed your reception of our noble guests yesterday, and blushed for the humility so apparent even in your curtsies. You were so little at your ease, and so thankful to your company, that you appeared more like the hostess of an inn, receiving the gentry of her county, than the mistress of one of the most splendid mansions in London, and the wife of one of the richest capitalists.”

“ I am sorry,” replied Mrs. Vernon meekly, “ that I have failed to meet your wishes. I am, as you know, naturally of a timid disposition, and feel myself embarrassed among so many strangers. Besides, not having been in my youth accustomed to such elevated society, I cannot shake off a certain degree of shyness, when I see myself surrounded by persons of such importance, and hear announced the titles of individuals of birth, whom I never expected to know but by the newspapers.”

“ Pooh, pooh — that is all nonsense ; recollect, that if the persons you now mix with have birth and rank to pride themselves on, (and proud and insolent enough are our aristocracy disposed to be, for these advantages) we have the aristocracy of wealth, which gives power and influence, and which we must make them feel, by receiving their advances with a careless politeness, which shows that we are by no means elated by them, but receive them as a

right, not as a concession. My son quoted Bacon to me the other day, as saying that knowledge is power. This I deny; wealth is power; every day proves it; and this, Bacon seems to have known as well as I, or why did he not content himself with knowledge, of which I admit he had a good stock, without seeking wealth by means which, if we believe his contemporaries, were not always strictly honorable?"

"If you allowed me to differ in opinion with you," said Mrs. Vernon, in her usually gentle tone, "I should say that I think our aristocratic friends much less haughty than the generality of our acquaintance. It appears to me, that their positions in society being established, they are not compelled to remind people of their claims, and consequently are more at their ease, and allow others to be more so, than our less elevated associates, who are continually making efforts to retain the places they have usurped."

“ You are wrong, quite wrong,” replied the obtuse husband. “ The very ease you talk of is a proof of their insolent *nonchalance*, as the French call it, and is to me much more offensive than all the self-important airs of the Davisons, Rowlands, and all the other millionaires on whom those great Lords and Ladies affect to look down, and receive at all their grand parties, only because they are rich. Defend me from the *condescension* of your people of fashion ! I know them, Mrs. Vernon, I know them.”

“ Then why seek them ?” asked the wife quietly. “ With your opinion of them, their society cannot contribute to your happiness.”

“ Will you never understand me, Mrs. Vernon ? Why did I toil for years, why risk the fortune so hardly earned, in speculations that might have beggared me, but to gain power, and to confront those proud Nobles face to face, making them feel that there is a still higher,

prouder aristocracy than theirs, that of *wealth*. Yes, I do make them feel this, and they hate me for it. Those on whose estates I have heavy mortgages, or who have political views which my interest may forward, are all civility. But look at the supercilious politeness of those who stand in neither of the predicaments I have named; observe the affected indifference with which they view my pictures, statues, gold plate, in short all that in their hearts they covet. And can you then wonder, that though I seek them because their presence administers to my vanity, I detest even while making use of them?"

Mrs. Vernon sighed, but answered not; experience had taught her that her gentle reasoning fell unheeded on the ear of her selfish and wilful husband, or only served to provoke harsh observations on her want of knowledge of the world and proper spirit.

“Recollect, Mrs. Vernon,” resumed the husband, “that I will have neither *your* sister nor *my* brother, nor their sons and daughters, invited to our fête. This I am decided on; I will have none but the very élite of fashion, as the newspapers term it, as nothing is so vexatious as to hear people asking the names of those, they meet nowhere else, and to know that these unknown individuals are our brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces.”

Mrs. Vernon ventured to remark, that were their relations to be seen three or four times, all questions would cease; but her husband casting a half angry, half contemptuous look at her, repeated his decision, that they should not be invited, and quitted the room, leaving his good-natured wife deeply pained at the mortification she must inflict on relations who were dear to her, and whose society constituted her chief enjoyment.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Vous demandez comment on fait ces grandes fortunes ? c’est parcequ’on est heureux. Dès qu’on est dans le fil de l’eau, il n’y a qu’à se laisser aller.”

MR. VERNON, commenced his career as a merchant with a good capital, a cool and calculating head, a heart that had so little influenced his actions, or feelings, that not only his friends, but himself, almost questioned its existence, and a sound stomach; the indulgence of which formed one of his principal sources of enjoyment. He passed the days of his youth untempted and untempting, until chance threw into his path Miss Bosville, the daughter and coheiress of a rich city banker, and to this cir-

cumstance, and not to her beauty, accomplishments, or amiable qualities—and she was rich in all these—did she owe the preference that Mr. Vernon professed, when he sought, and, aided by her father's advice, won her hand.

The well-established reputation for exactitude and caution Mr. Vernon had gained in business, joined to his wealth and regularity of conduct, had won the approbation of Mr. Bosville; and as there was nothing disagreeable in his appearance, and as he assumed a softness of manner calculated to please the young and amiable person he sought as a wife, she soon yielded to his suit, and in her twenty-third year became the wife of Mr. Vernon, who was ten years her senior.

With little of the romantic in her feelings, and a less than usual portion of the imagination that falls to her sex, Mrs. Vernon possessed an affectionate disposition, an equal and sweet temper, great good sense, and an undeviating

gentleness, joined to a natural timidity, which lent a grace to her manners and rendered her peculiarly formed to make an excellent wife and mother, and to be the focus of attraction and happiness in the domestic circle.

Soon after the marriage of Mrs. Vernon, her sister became the wife of a junior partner in the bank of her father, and continued to move in the unfashionable, but estimable sphere of her early friends ; while Mr. Vernon, aided by the large fortune his wife had brought him, extended his commercial connexions, and Fortune seemed delighted to shower on him her choicest favours, by realizing even more than his hitherto ambitious dreams of wealth.

Years had flown, and each succeeding one had added thousands to the wealth of Mr. Vernon : he became noted on Change, quoted in the City, a principal sharer in loans, a large landed proprietor, and an influential member of Parliament, who would shortly, report

stated, be raised to the peerage. He was the father of two sons, both in Parliament, and of two daughters, on whom he meant to bestow fortunes that must entitle them to marry with the highest. His house in London was a palace fitted up with all that luxury could invent or wealth command: the finest specimens of art in painting and sculpture were seen at every side; and not only Danaë, but Venus herself, and all the beau idéals of mythology, had yielded to the golden shower of this modern corrupter, and left the land of their birth to decorate the walls or niches of the new temple of Plutus.

The *chef-d'œuvres* of Benvenuto Cellini, with all the treasures of the *cinqua cento*, filled his cabinets—treasures that afforded their owner no enjoyment save that of seeing the admiration and envy they excited. Vases of crystal-de-roche, set in enamel, and enriched with sparkling gems; cups of onyx, and jars of

lapis lazuli and malachite, with the rich and laboured *bijouterie* of the time of Louis the Fourteenth, were disposed on stands of silver and ebony of curious workmanship : while the costly *porcelaine de Sevres*, of Turquoise blue, or the pale rose of Dubary, were scattered through the various suites of rooms, all vouchers of the wealth that had given to their present owner the spoils of the once proud palaces of the Eternal City, of Genoa the Superb, of Venice the Gorgeous, and of Florence ; of whose merchant princes, the riches, love of display, and ambition of the present possessor of their treasures, reminded one, though not of their taste,—for in this Mr. Vernon had no rivalry with the Medici, though master of some of their finest specimens of art,—of the excellence that their taste had called forth.

The Library of Vernon House was the *ne plus ultra* of magnificence. Bookcases of carved rose-wood, supported by Corinthian columns

of the same precious materials, the capitals and frieze gilt, and crowned by antique busts of or-molu, contained all that ancient or modern literature could offer. Large mirrors, descending from the architraves to the base, reflected the fine proportions of the library, with the gorgeous bindings of the books, and the gilded busts and antique vases filled with the rarest flowers, that were distributed around. Behind the mirrors, which turned on a pivot, maps were arranged, and in recesses beneath, the celestial and terrestrial globes were divided by a facsimile of the Warwick Vase, in pure gold of colossal dimensions, filled with *pot pourri*, breathing of Araby the blest. Tripods of or-molu, bearing candelabres, were placed in front of the mirrors. The curtains were of crimson satin, trimmed with gold bullion fringe, and fell in graceful folds to the ground.

The cornices corresponded with and joined the friezes of the bookcases, and, like them,

were in alto-relievo, representing subjects from the antique, executed in or-molu : the carpet was made to match the curtains, and its material was so thick that the foot fell unheeded on its surface, enhancing the luxury of the springy elasticity of its touch by its total absorption of sound.

One end of the library opened into an orangery, with a marble fountain by Bernini in the centre, that sent its crystal streams in air ; and this again led into an aviary filled with the choicest singing-birds, whose notes mingled with the murmurs of the fountain, and led one to believe that one was far away from the murky atmosphere of London. The windows were of gold-coloured glass, reflecting a glowing radiance, and giving a Claude Lorraine tint to all around.

Wherever the eye rested, it was met by forms of beauty, and tints various as the rays of a golden sun setting into repose, that filled the

soul with delicious musings. The easy chair, the lounging sofa, the Grecian canopy, each with their table on castors, containing all the apparatus of writing, almost tempted the indolent by the facility they offered of describing the ideas the beauty of the scene was so calculated to give birth to. This was a sort of royal road to learning, where luxury wooed the student, presenting all that antiquity can boast to refine and elevate the mind, and all that modern civilization can afford for the luxuriant indulgence of the person.

Here, where genius might have essayed his pinions, and talent conveyed its impressions to ages yet unborn, the man of wealth, the heartless parvenu, made his notes of speculation of thousands to be acquired, influence to be gained, and friends to be left off, the scene possessing no more power over his obtuse nerves, than the obscure counting-house where his ambitious visions first took flight.

Nothing in art can continue to dazzle but so long as we are unaccustomed to the contemplation of it. Let a person dwell for some months, nay, a few weeks, in one of the mansions that has the most struck his fancy, and he will find that by degrees his vision becomes so used to the objects which first enchanted him, that he soon ceases to be sensible of their presence, or to feel aught more than that general complacency excited in the mind by being surrounded by agreeable objects. It is otherwise with the beauties of nature. The more the eye becomes accustomed to behold them, the more pleasure do they convey : each point of view gains a new interest by being contrasted with others ; the different periods of the day or season change the appearance, and throw a fresh light over the scene, that prevents its ever becoming monotonous.

CHAPTER XXV.

L'huitre est malheureuse quand quelque longue maladie fait qu'elle devient perle : c'est précisément le bonheur de l'ambition.

MONTESQUIEU.

MR. VERNON had neither grown wiser nor happier with his accession to riches. They opened new fields to his ambition, and as by degrees he realized the dreams which that encroaching passion had engendered, he found the vista extended to an interminable distance ; the most remote point being always the most brilliant and seducing, holding forth hopes that there he might repose, and enjoy the good he had gained. But

“ Illusive hope still points to distant good.”

A competency was the first object that lent activity to the exertions of Mr. Vernon; this acquired, the prospect of wealth became the next point of attraction. But as wealth is comparative, his ideas on this score enlarged with his means of acquiring it; and he who would have considered himself at the acmé of his ambition as master of a plum, had now arrived at thinking himself unlucky as a *millionaire*, unless a coronet glittered on his brow.

But while seeking this imaginary good, a sentiment of dislike and envy to all who possessed hereditary claims to its distinction, was prominent in his breast. He looked on their gaiety as insulting, their coldness as revolting, and their indifference as something not to be borne, at least, until he had gained the first step in the ladder that he meant to climb. He affected in conversation to despise the distinctions of rank, though rank was the

sole end and aim of his existence : and yet he has been known to break forth into disbelief and invective, when some person has inadvertently stated the refusal of some very distinguished commoner, — some Burdett of the day, — to accept the Peerage, as if such a refusal was impossible.

Mr. Vernon was so intent in looking forward that he had forgotten to look back, else might he have remembered the former points of his ambition, — points that had receded as soon as reached, and were thought of no more. Experience might have taught him, that hitherto success had but excited him to new exertions. But when did man profit by the lessons of experience ?

“ Man never is, but always to be blest ; ”

and as long as Hope, Fortune, or Ambition, has a bauble to lure men on, they rarely pause

until the grave receives them, and ends their illusions.

This *has* been, and will be the history of man, as long as the genus exists, thinking only of that future that will end but as the past, in disappointment, or that he shall never see. He who calls himself prudent, laughs at the extravagance of the thoughtless dissipater of wealth, who, determined to enjoy to-day lest to-morrow come not for him, spreads around him the enjoyments that gold can procure, and lives to want the comforts that he has bartered for luxuries. This to the prudent man seems madness, or folly; and he says, “I will keep my stores until unbounded riches have given me the means of enjoying all, and then I will indulge to satiety.” But he reckes not that the sense of enjoyment will then have passed for ever, and that the cup filled by the syren Pleasure can charm no more—Ambition takes

the place of Avarice, as Avarice has usurped that of Pleasure, all doomed to the same end—disappointment.

Mr. Vernon felt not that his days were fast fleeting in the pursuit of the imaginary good that had lured him on, and that enjoyment had not yet found him ; but he flattered himself, that once elevated to the rank he had so long aspired to, he should enjoy repose when a coronet encircled his brow. But until that wished-for event, uneasy lay the head which anticipated it, though that head was pillowed on down, and had the supposed sleep-giving consciousness of being the master of countless thousands.

Mr. Vernon possessed a vague idea that perfect happiness was only to be attained by arriving at the fourth step in the peerage ; but he tried to stifle this thought, because he felt that his age gave him little chance of accomplishing

it, and consoled himself with the hope that, once a Lord, his feelings would change, and that he should begin to taste the pleasures he had hitherto put away from him, lest they might interfere with the grand object of his pursuit.

The eldest son of Mr. Vernon resembled his father in selfishness and in ambition. A noble or generous feeling had never had a place in his breast; for egoism, vanity, and conceit had left little room for other passions. With the advantages of having passed his boyhood at Eton — that Macadamiser of hereditary distinctions—he was much less impressed with a respect for rank than was his father. He had approached too near nobility to be imposed on by the false notions adopted by those who see it at a distance; and he found that the Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Lord Johns and Lord Henrys, of the first and second forms, had nothing to distinguish them from

their untitled playmates, except what he could little appreciate—an open manliness and good breeding, the effects of that freedom from hauteur and affectation that is, in general, a remarkable characteristic in the ancient nobility.

This close contact with the young scions of aristocracy had taken off Francis Vernon's deference for them, and left him free from prejudices for or against them; but Christ Church, with what he called its invidious distinctions, excited his wrath; and though he liked to lounge on the arm of a tufted collegian, he disliked him for the badge that marked the difference in their birth, and longed for the period that would elevate him to rank and station. His father's well-calculated liberality had enabled him to maintain a prominent position at Christ Church: he had the best hunters, the best furnished rooms, gave the most *recherché* dinners the most frequently

of any man at Oxford, and piqued himself on having his rooms constantly filled with the *élite* of his circle, which he attributed to the attraction of his society, until a candid friend avowed, in a moment of *abandon*, that he, too, would adopt Vernon's mode of filling his rooms, by placing large mirrors in them,—the sure plan of collecting visiters, and the only reflections *à la mode* at Christ Church.

During his visits to the paternal roof in London or in Wiltshire, Francis Vernon was sure to engage some of his titled companions as guests, proud to display to them the unbounded luxury that reigned there, and glad to show his parents and sisters the perfect equality with which he treated the owners of the high-sounding titles that he abridged of their rank in conversation, which never failed to be remarked and rewarded by a complacent smile from his father.

Henry Vernon, two years junior to his brother, resembled his mother in gentleness and amiability, to which he united firmness and decision, with considerable talent and general information.

The sisters were handsome, showy, and accomplished ; skilled in all the arts of display, and as ambitious and aspiring as even their father could desire. They were ready to lend themselves to any scheme to procure their elevation into that third heaven of their imagination,—some ducal family.

To accomplish this desirable object, dinners and balls in the season, select parties at Vernon Villa at Richmond, and shooting-parties in the autumn and winter were arranged, to which two latter, none were engaged that could mar the projects of the inviter, or distract the attention of the invited from the objects of attraction held forth to them. Earls had

danced and sighed, Viscounts had talked of the happiness of domestic life, and Barons had searched for the hidden shawls, or boas, and assisted the fair owners in enveloping their persons with them, evincing a tender anxiety, indicative of more than common interest ; but the Misses Vernons were not to be caught by aught less brilliant than the present possessors or expectants of a Dukedom, and were voted by the aspirants to their favour as very amiable, but rather reserved, which was attributed to the old-fashioned notions inculcated by Madame Mère, instead of to the indifference of the young ladies.

It is thus that vanity accounts for all that might be mortifying to self ; and lucky it is that it has such consolation !

CHAPTER XXVI.

How many in the married state we find
Wedded in person, but divorced in mind.
Mezentius chain'd the living to the dead,
Unnatural union ! which has horror bred.
Though but one victim suffer'd from the chain,
While Wedlock gives to *two* an equal pain.
“ *Marriage,*” *an old Poem.*

MR. HENRY VERNON had acquired riches more slowly than his elder brother, and was content to enjoy them less ostentatiously. Simple in taste and cultivated in mind, he looked on wealth as a means, and not as the end of enjoyment, and really found gratification in

the choice works of art and well-chosen library with which he had enriched his spacious and richly-furnished house.

One daughter was the sole offspring of the ill-assorted union of Mr. Henry Vernon with the rich and handsome—or rather let us pay respect to the gifts of Nature by placing them before that of Fortune, and say, the handsome and rich Miss Oswald. When Mr. H. Vernon wooed and won this lady, he was more attracted by the roses on her cheek, and the lustre in her eye, than by the thousands that composed her dower, or the large expectancies that futurity promised her. She was so young and lovely, that Scepticism itself could hardly have doubted that one whose beauty was so calculated to adorn the domestic circle, should sigh for a more extended theatre to exhibit her charms.

Henry Vernon was not the first, and will not be the last man, who discovers that a beautiful

exterior may cover a cold and selfish heart. Such discoveries, like all that depend on experience, arrive too late to be of advantage to him who makes them. All are ready to admit this truism ; but who ever was willing to profit by the experience of others, though offered ever so much below prime cost ? Henry Vernon soon found that he could neither expect a friend nor companion in his wife ; and that he must be content to abandon the hopes he had formed of cheerful evenings at home,—his expected consolation for long hours of confinement in his counting-house,—and return to his solitary hearth, to seek in the perusal of some new work to pass the hours wasted by his wife in a round of amusements, which appearing to her to be the sole end of existence, any attempt to interrupt them only produced reproaches, ill-humour, and obstinacy.

The birth of a daughter produced no change

in Mrs. Henry Vernon's feelings. The same round of heartless, joyless amusements continued to fill up her time, interrupted by petulant complaints of being left out of Mrs. Vernon's select parties, and expressions of anger and vexation towards her husband for what he could neither avert nor change. Henry Vernon had observed with pain his brother's intentional withdrawal from his society; habits of youthful intimacy had cemented a brotherly affection on his side, which had never been but slightly participated by Mr. Vernon, and which pride and ambition quickly extinguished.

Conscious that he was acting unkindly, he soon began to dislike the sight of his brother, because, by reminding him of his wilful neglect, it became a source of embarrassment and reproach.

It rarely happens when we behave ill towards any one with whom we have lived on terms of

affection that dislike towards that person does not ensue; and the less excuse we find in our own hearts for our unkindness, the more strongly do we entertain the dislike. We begin by being unkind, and we end by being unjust and cruel; and it is well if we confine ourselves to feelings, and do not commit actions which wounded conscience will surely, though too late, avenge.

Mrs. Vernon felt a sincere friendship and respect for her brother-in-law, whose society was so agreeable to her taste as to induce her to submit without a murmur to that of his wife, which was far from being congenial to her. She saw with regret her husband's cold and unbrotherly wish of withdrawing from anything more than an occasional intercourse, and felt pain at each interview, on observing the undiminished kindness of Henry Vernon's manner, which seemed like a tacit avowal that he knew there was no want of affection on *her*

part ; while the offended air and angry insinuations of his wife embarrassed and annoyed her.

But if Mrs. Vernon felt pained at being compelled to withdraw from the intimacy of her brother-in-law's family, how much more deeply did she feel at being forced to confine her intercourse with a loved and only sister to occasional visits, formal dinners once or twice in the season, and now and then an affectionate *tête-à-tête*, when both felt anxious to conceal from the other the consciousness that their intercourse was limited, and marked this consciousness by a careful avoidance of any reference to the innumerable dinners, balls, and routs, the accounts of which so constantly filled up the columns of the "Court Journal," where the "fashionable" or "elegant" Mrs. Vernon generally headed some leading-article in the list of fashionable intelligence.

With that fine tact peculiar to women, and

which always exists in proportion to the warmth of heart and delicacy of the person possessing it, Mrs. Burrell, the sister of Mrs. Vernon, had early observed the line of conduct Mr. Vernon had forced his wife to adopt, and that which she herself must follow, to save her affectionate and sensitive sister from additional pain. Mrs. Burrell, therefore, avoided all allusion to the infrequency of their intercourse, and contented herself with showing an increased affection in her manner when they met.

By this delicacy, Mrs. Vernon was saved the pang of thinking, that while obeying the harsh mandates of a husband, she had either wounded or lost a sister's heart; and the soft and continued pressure with which she retained that sister's hand in her's marked how gratefully she felt this forbearing tenderness to her feelings.

Less tact on either side must have led to most painful scenes. Temper, good-nature,

and affection, though precious in themselves, must fail to insure the happiness of those dear to us unless we also possess tact, the invaluable gift which is the true panacea that sweetens the cup of life, founded on forbearance, itself a virtue. Tact enables us to avoid wounding, and to repel wounds; it is the sure indicator of goodness as well as refinement; for though the latter lends additional charms to its practice, it is the former that gives birth to it. Tact, like Genius, must be inherent; and cultivation only does for one what it does for the other, polishes and refines both, but cannot create either.

I refer not to that spurious Tact, the offspring of society, nursed by policy and educated by deception, which enables people who dislike, or are indifferent to each other, to meet without any excitement or betrayal of angry feelings; to show interest where none is experienced, and to avoid all occasions of touch-

ing on disagreeable subjects. This, I admit, is best acquired in an intercourse with polished society; but the Tact I worship is that which springs from the sensitive mind, with all the bland influences of kindness, blessed and blessing, the full-grown offspring of goodness. This Tact precludes the necessity of speech: a look suffices: a pressure of the hand, or total silence, is often more eloquent than all that language could express—

“ *El silentio ancor suolo*

Haver prieghi e parole.”

Mr. Burrell, with all his wife's affectionate nature, wanted her philosophy; he felt mortified, not for himself but her, at seeing her left out at all the brilliant fêtes given by the Vernons; and when their acquaintance, with that want of perception so remarkable in a certain class, dwelt on the newspaper descriptions of such fêtes, and appealed to Mrs. Bur-

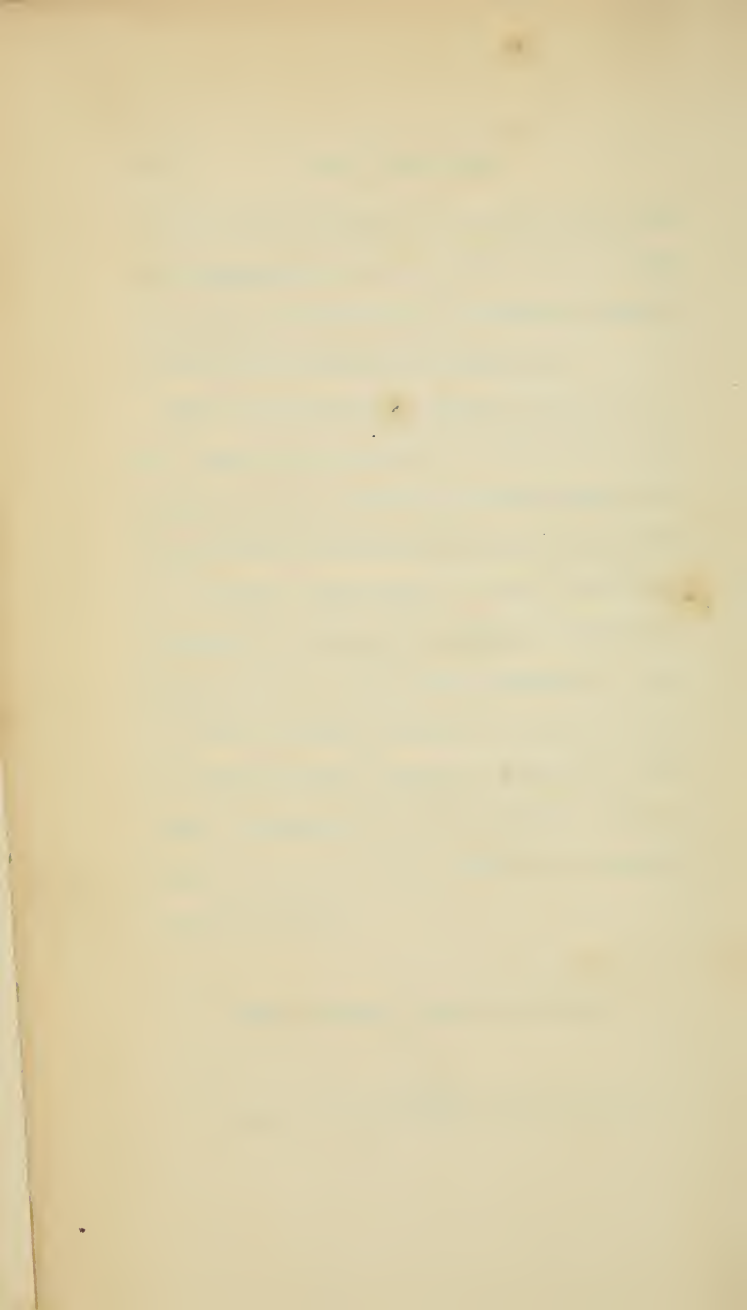
rell for the particulars, the embarrassed looks and heightened colour of his wife, who was only embarrassed because she felt what was passing in his mind, increased his displeasure.

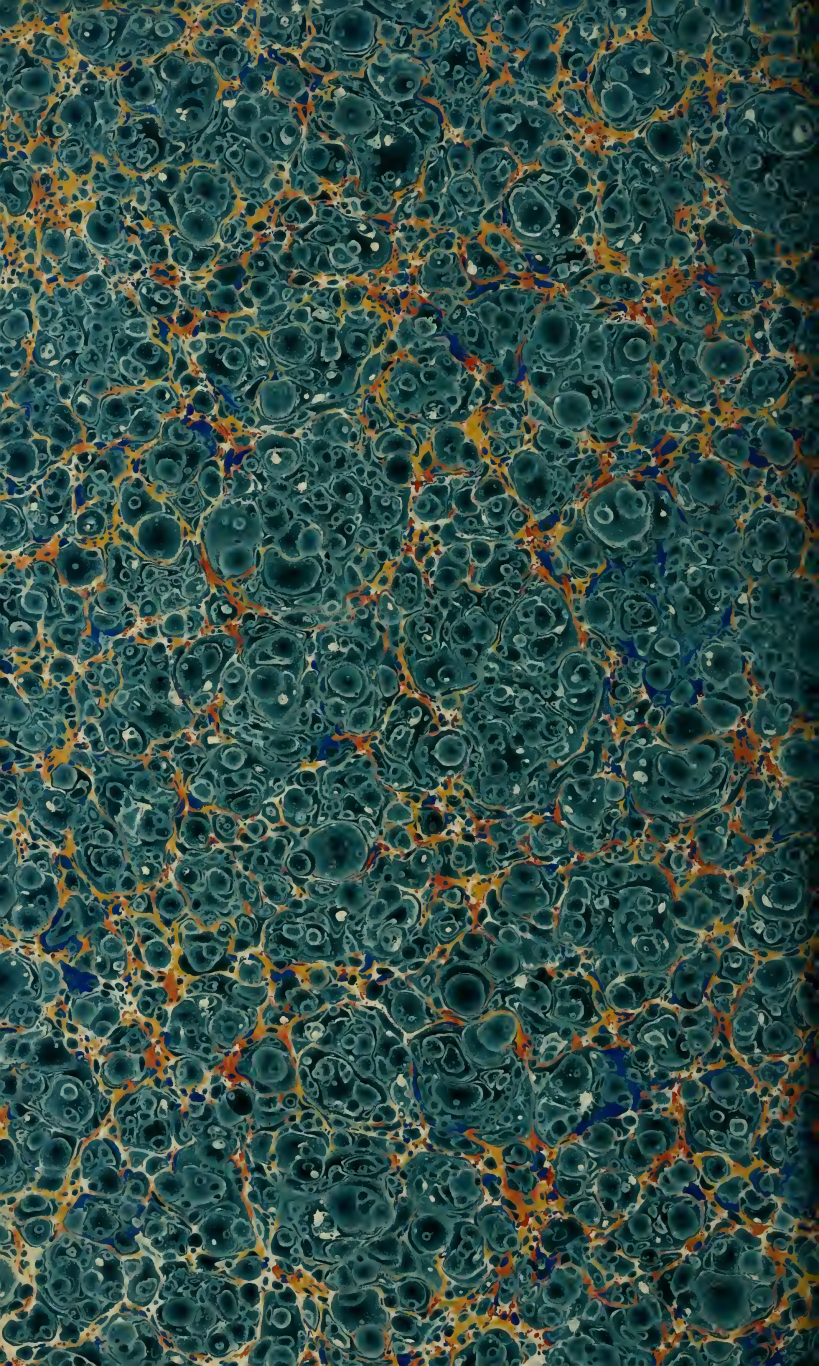
Mr. Burrell was justly proud of his wife; he was aware of her merits; he had been accustomed to see her looked up to and respected by all his friends; and as his fortune and position were highly respectable, he was shocked and humiliated at finding her unappreciated by her brother-in-law: and secretly accused her sister of a want of respect for her, or a want of spirit in vindicating what was due to herself, in thus tamely submitting to the imperious and unnatural dictation of her selfish and worldly-minded husband.

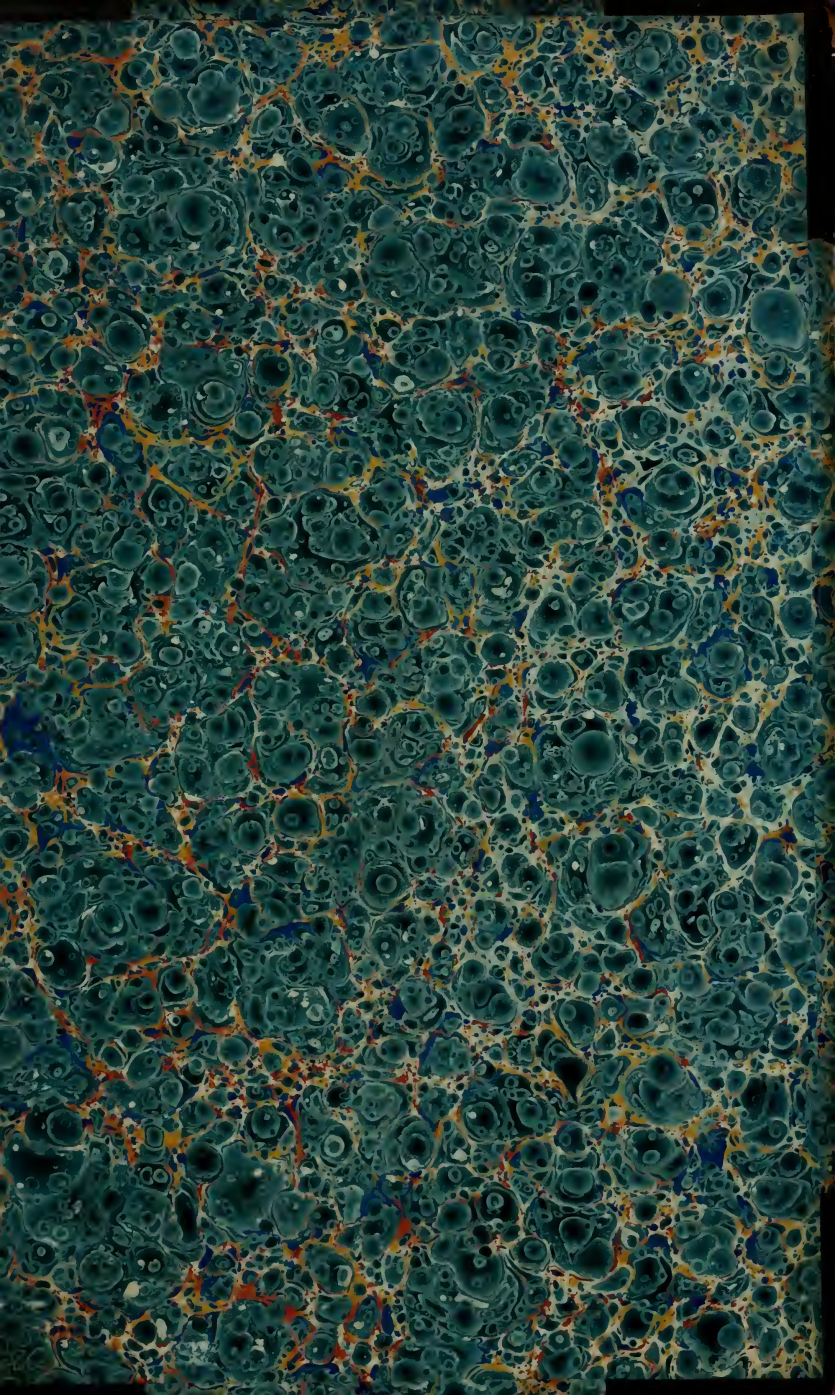
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